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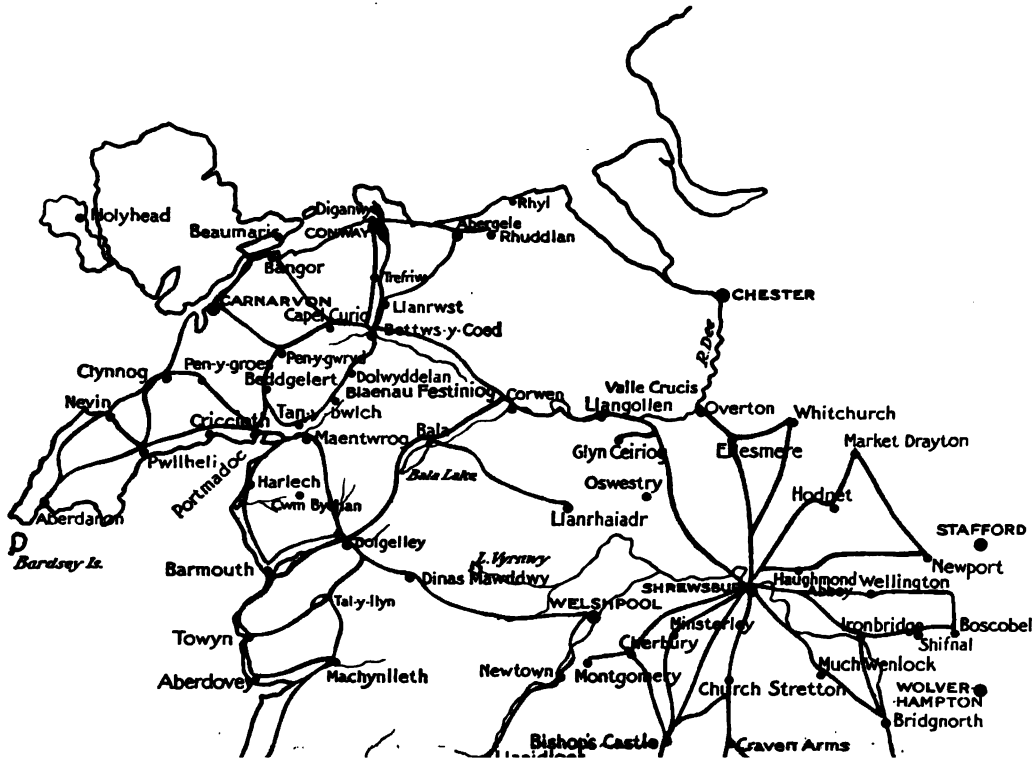
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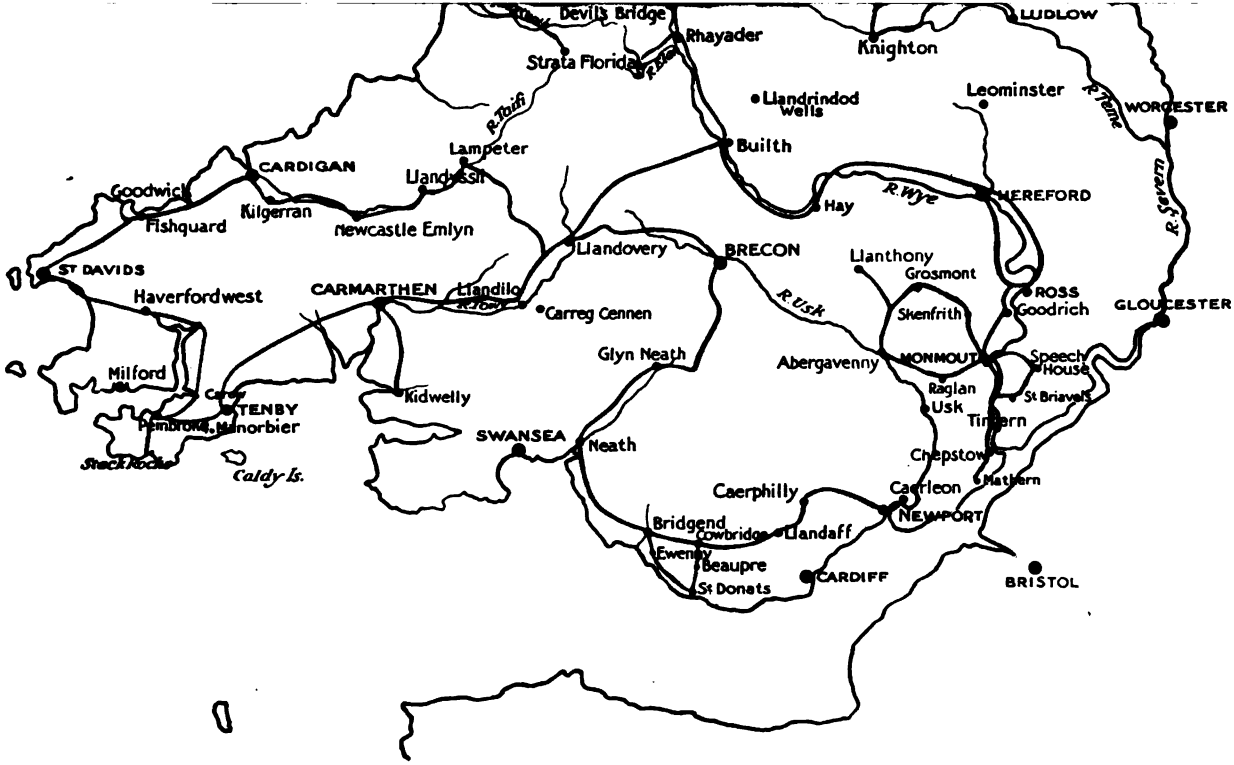
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MOTOR TOURS IN WALES AND THE BORDER COUNTIES

VALLE CRUCIS ABBEY.

[*Frontispiece.*

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IN
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COUNTIES

By

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BOSTON
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1909

VALLE CRUCIS ABBEY.

Ft. to Space.

MOTOR TOURS
IN
WALES & THE BORDER COUNTIES

By Maud Margaret (Kay)
Mrs. Rodolph Stawell

With Photographs by
R. De S. Stawell

BOSTON
L. C. PAGE & COMPANY
1909

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Much of the material of this book has appeared in the *Car Illustrated*, and is here reproduced by the kind consent of Lord Montagu.

SHORT RUNS IN SHROPSHIRE

SHORT RUNS IN SHROPSHIRE

THERE was once a tramp who said—

"Och, now, it's true what I'm tellin' ye; I never got a bit o' good out o' me life till I took to the road!"

He was quite serious about it. He was a nice tramp, with a fine sense of romance and a large trust in the future, and on this first day of the tour his words ring in my head above the rush of the wind and the throbbing of the engine. For though all the days will be good, this first day is surely the best. To be on the road again; to have one's luggage behind one and all the world in front; to watch the villages slipping by and mark their changing character; to saunter through strange towns and swing across great, desolate moorlands; to pause at some attractive inn, or eat sand-

wiches and sunshine by the wayside—this is the first day. History and the camera must wait; the first day must be given up to the sheer joy of the road.

So, as we shall not be able to hurry in Shropshire, seeing that there history cannot be ignored, we shall do well to cross its border in the evening, and spend the night in Ludlow. We will drop gently down the hill by Ludford House, and cross the Teme when the light is growing dim, and we can only tell by the deepening of the shadows in the trees on the left that the castle stands among them. Then we will climb a short, steep hill into the town through the only one of the old gates that is still standing, turn to the right through the Bull Ring, and draw up before the famous carved front of the "Feathers."

Here in this little town, in its historic inn, in its church and its great castle, we may find the concentrated essence, as it were, of the glamour of Shropshire—that borderland where the local stories have helped to make the history of England, and the quiet towns have seen wild deeds of

LUDLOW CASTLE.

THE FEATHERS HOTEL, LUDLOW.

courage and horror, and the fields have been red with blood; where every tiny village has its own tale of love or battle, of fair lady or fugitive king. This very house, the "Feathers," has a world of romance in its timbered walls and panelled rooms, for it is far older than the beautiful Jacobean chimney-piece before which we shall presently dine. These moulded ceilings and elaborate carvings, it is said, were once the property of a member of that Council of the Welsh Marches that Edward IV. established to bring order into the affairs of this stormy neighbourhood, where the "Lords Marchers" had hitherto taken what they chose, and kept it if they could. It is said that the English King once asked by what warrant the Lords Marchers held their lands. "By this warrant," said one of them grimly, drawing his sword—and the inquiry went no further.

The President of this Council lived in the great castle that still stands so imposingly above the Teme, with its outer and inner baileys, its Norman keep and curious

round chapel, and all its long, long memories.

Within these grey walls we may dream of many things, both pitiful and gay: of all the children who have played and the poets who have written here; of young Prince Arthur, who died here; of his bride, Katherine of Arragon; of poor Princess Mary—"my ladie Prince's grace," as they called her quaintly—the Queen of blood and tears. Edward IV. and his brother Edmund, dressed in green gowns, played in these courts as boys, and wrote a letter to their "right noble lord and father," begging him daily to give them his hearty blessing, and to send them some fine bonnets by the next sure messenger; and here on the right is the roofless tower whose crumbling walls are haunted by the most touching memories in all Ludlow. For these weed-grown stones have echoed to the voices of Edward IV.'s little sons, who lived and laughed here with no thought of that grimmer Tower that is connected for ever with their names. There is still existing a wonderful letter written

TUDOR DOORWAY, LUDLOW CASTLE

THE ROUND CHAPEL, LUDLOW CASTLE.

by the King to "his Castle of Lodelowe," in which he gives the most minute instructions as to the education and general deportment of the Prince of Wales—not forgetting the baby's bedtime. His Majesty, indeed, was definite on all points.

"We will that our said son have his breakfast immediately after his mass; and between that and his meat to be occupied in such virtuous learning as his age shall suffer to receive."

His age at this time was three years. Not only was the virtuous learning to occupy him from breakfast till dinner, but during the latter meal "such noble stories as behoveth to a prince to understand and know" were to be read aloud to him; and "after his meat, in eschewing of idleness," he was to be "occupied about his learning" again. It is a relief to read that after his supper he was to have "all such honest disports as may be conveniently devised for his recreation." At eight o'clock his attendants were "to enforce themselves to make him merry and joyous towards his bed"; and, indeed, after so hard a day of virtuous

learning and noble stories and honest disports, the poor child must have been glad to get there!

Later on, when Sir Henry Sidney was President of the Council, this ground where we are standing was trodden by his son Philip, the pattern of chivalry, who "fearde no foe, nor ever fought a friend"; and it was through that doorway at the top of the inclined plane—then a flight of marble steps—that little Lady Alice Egerton, not knowing that she was on her way to immortality, passed on the evening that she took part in the first performance of *Comus*, which Milton had written for her.

It is curious that in this venerable town so many of our thoughts should be claimed by the very young. Ludlow Castle, as one sits here thinking of the past, seems to be peopled with the ghosts of children. And even in the church whose great tower gives Ludlow so distinguished an air, the church where the solemn Councillors of the Marches have their pompous tombs, we find the grave of Philip Sidney's little sister. "Heare

lyethe the bodye of Ambrozia Sydney, iiijth doughter of the Right Honourable Syr Henrye Sydney . . . and the Ladye Mary his wyef." It is sometimes said, too, that Prince Arthur, Henry VII.'s young son, is buried here, but this is not the case. There is a cenotaph that was, perhaps raised in his memory, but his body was taken to Worcester Cathedral.

These are the gentler memories of Ludlow. Of the fiercer kind there is no lack, from the old fighting days of the de Lacy who built the keep, and the de Dinan who built the round chapel, down through centuries of siege and battle to the time of the Civil War, when the King's flag flew here longer than on any other castle of Shropshire.

Ludlow might well be chosen as a centre for motor drives in Herefordshire, Shropshire, and Worcestershire. But for the moment we are concerned with Shropshire only, and the centre of that county, in every sense, is Shrewsbury; and so, sad though it is to leave Ludlow so soon, we must glide away down the steep pitch beyond the door of the "Feathers," past

the railway station, past the racecourse, and over the twenty-nine miles of excellent and level road that lie between Ludlow and Shrewsbury.

The first village on this road, Bromfield, is very typical of the villages of Shropshire at their best. The black-and-white cottages seem to have been set in their places with an eye to pictorial effect; the stream and bridge are exactly in the right spot; and to complete the picture, a beautiful old gatehouse stands a little way back from the road. It is built half of stone, half of timber and plaster, and was once the gateway of a Benedictine Priory which is mentioned in Domesday Book as being of some importance. It leads now to the church, and is one of those unexpected touches of beauty and interest that may meet one's eye at any turn of a Shropshire road.

At Onibury we cross the line and the river Onny, and about a mile and a half further on we should begin to look for Stokesay Castle on the left. As it is a little way from the main road, and partly hidden by trees, it is easy to miss it when

ENTRANCE TO HALL IN WHICH "COMUS" WAS FIRST PERFORMED.

Photo by] [*W. D. Haydon.*

STOKESAY CASTLE.

travelling at a good pace; but it is perhaps the most attractive ruin in Shropshire from an artist's point of view, and should on no account be neglected. It is really a fortified house rather than a castle, and the mingling of the warlike with the domestic gives it a peculiar charm. The northern end, with its irregular roof and overhanging upper storey, the "Solar Room," with its magnificent carved chimney-piece, and even the timbered gateway, are all merely suggestive of a dwelling-house; and it is only when we turn to the curious polygonal tower that we remember how in the old days an Englishman's house was either very literally his castle or was likely to become some other Englishman's house at an early date. As far as I know, however, the only time that Stokesay had to make any use of its defences was when it was garrisoned for the King during the Civil War, and on that occasion it seems to have yielded without much ado.

It is by very pleasant ways that this road is leading us—between wooded hills and over quiet streams. The valley narrows

and is at its prettiest near Marshbrook and Little Stretton; then the pointed hill of Caradoc became conspicuous, and beyond it the famous Wrekin appears—famous not for its beauty, but because, being in the centre of the county, it can be seen by nearly every one in Shropshire, and so has gathered round it the sentiment of all Salopian hearts. "To friends all round the Wrekin!" is the famous Shropshire toast, and there, far away to the right, is the isolated rounded hill that means so much to those born within sight of it. At Stretton we leave the hills and wooded valleys behind us, and pass through a few miles of rather dull country. It is at the village of Bayston Hill that we first see, dimly blue against a background of hills, the slender spires—almost unrivalled in beauty—of that fair town which long ago the Welsh named *Y Mwythig*, the Delight.

The history of Shrewsbury is stirring, and very, very long. When England was still in the making she stood there on her hill, looking down at the encircling river that has defended her for so many centuries.

Nearly every street is connected in some way with history; every second house is haunted by some great name. Many large and solemn books have been written about Shrewsbury, and not one of them is dull. Even in these few hundred yards between the river and our hotel how many memories there are! As we turn on to the English Bridge to cross the Severn we should glance backwards to the right at the red tower and great west window of the Abbey founded by the Conqueror's kinsman, Roger de Montgomery, a man of mark; and then, having crossed the steep rise and fall of the bridge, we climb into the heart of the town by the hill called the Wyle Cop. It was up this steep hill that, not so very long ago, the London coach used to dash, turning into the yard of the Lion Hotel at a pace that is still spoken of with awe and admiration. If we were to do the like we should probably have to pay five pounds and costs, so we will ascend the Cop in a way more conducive to dreaming of the past: of Harry Tudor on his way to "trye hys right" at Bosworth, with the welcom-

ing citizens strewing flowers before him; of the more stately procession that wound up the hill when he came back as Henry VII. with his Queen and young Prince Arthur; of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, and his stepson Essex, after their reception by bailiffs and aldermen, "and other to the number of xxiiij scarlet gowns, with the scollars of the freescoole," listening wearily "at the upper end of the Wylde Coppe," to three orations! Henry Tudor, when he reached the Wyle Cop, was glad to take shelter for the night in that picturesque little black-and-white house with the overhanging top storey and the tiled roof—it is on the left, rather more than half-way up the hill—for he had not won his way into the town without difficulty. "The gates weare shutt against him and the portculleys lett downe," and a bailiff of the town—"a stout, wise gentleman," we are told—vowed that Henry should only enter over his prostrate body. So, when Henry had made it clear that he did not mean to hurt the town, "nor none therein," the only way for the stout, wise gentleman to

keep his word was by lying down on the ground and allowing his future king to step over him. Thus did Henry of Richmond come in triumph to the little house on the Wyle.

If we are going to the "Raven,' or the "Crown," as is probable, we turn to the right near the top of the hill, and pass the beautiful old timbered house—which stands on the right hand, a little back from the street —where Princess Mary stayed on her way to Ludlow after she had been created *Prince* of Wales; and a little further up, on the left, is the many-gabled house where Prince Rupert lived for a time when he was here with Charles I. On each side of us rises one of the slender spires that are the pride of Shrewsbury. St. Alkmund's Church, on the left, was founded by Alfred's daughter Ethelfleda, known as the Lady of the Mercians; a lady, it would seem, of some force. "A woman of an enlarged soul," William of Malmesbury calls her; and adds: "This spirited heroine assisted her brother greatly with her advice, and was of equal service in building cities." It is gravely

recorded in a serious chronicle that in 1533 "the dyvyll apearyd in Saint Alkmond's Churche there when the preest was at highe masse with greate tempest and darknes, so that as he passyd through the churche he mountyd up the steeple in the sayde churche, teringe the wyer of the sayde clocke, and put the prynt of hys clawes uppon the iiijth bell." This steeple on our left was the very scene of this feat; but the body of the church was rebuilt in the eighteenth century. Another old Shrewsbury church, St. Chad's, had fallen down, and the congregation of Saint Alkmund's feared a repetition of the disaster. In the case of St. Alkmund's, however, it was the rebuilding that was the disaster.

The story of St. Mary's lovely spire, on our right, is full of incident. In 1572 it was "blown aside by wind"; in 1594 "there fell such a monstrous dry wind, and so extreme fierce . . . that the like was never seen of those that be living . . . the force whereof removed the upper part of St. Mary's steeple out of his place towards the south about five inches"; in 1662 the steeple was

"taken down six yards from the top"; in 1690 it was damaged by an earthquake; in 1754 it was "shattered by a high wind"; in 1756 the newly-built part was again "blown aside"; in 1818 the upper part "became loose"; and during a terrific storm in 1894 fifty feet of its masonry fell through the roof of the nave shortly after the evening service. Most wonderfully this last disaster did no damage to the stained glass, which is St. Mary's great glory and has itself had an eventful existence; for some of it was in old St. Chad's when it fell, and much of it, long ago, filled the windows of religious houses in Germany.

The slender columns and pointed arches of this lovely church have rung to the voice of Charles I., who once proclaimed his good intentions within these walls, and knelt, harassed and nearly uncrowned, before this altar. It was in St. Mary's, too, that James II. touched for the King's Evil.

Just beyond the church is the Crown Hotel, and whether we stay there or at the "Raven," a hundred yards away, we shall hear the bells of St. Mary's, once described

as "the comfortablest ring of bells in all the town," and the chiming clock that was the bequest of Fanny Burney's Uncle James, and the curfew, which still rings every night at nine. And after the curfew we shall hear the number of the day of the month rung out—a relic of the times before cheap almanacs existed.

There is no doubt that the most satisfactory way of seeing Shropshire is to spend a few nights in Shrewsbury, and make it the basis of operations; for Shrewsbury lies exactly in the centre of the county, and is the meeting-point of a particularly large number of good roads. The old town itself, too, does not deserve to be hurried through. The longer one stays in it the more one feels the charm of its gentle old age.

The Old School Buildings are within a stone's-throw of us, with all their memories of the wise and great: memories that are, as a matter of fact, older than themselves; for though Charles Darwin was educated within these very walls, it was in an older building of wood, standing on the same spot, that Philip Sidney was a schoolboy—gentle

and grave, and as much loved then as he was destined to be all his life, and is still. It was while he was here that his father wrote him a "very godly letter . . . most necessarie for all yoong gentlemen to be carried in memorie," which his mother, who added a postscript "in the skirts of my Lord President's letter," considered to be so full of "excellent counsailes," that she begged Philip to "fayle not continually once in foure or five daies to reade them over." The counsels were certainly excellent. "Be humble and obedient to your master," says Sir Henry, ". . . be courteous of gesture. . . . Give yourself to be merie . . . but let your mirth be ever void of all scurrillitie and biting words to any man. . . . Above all things, tell no untruth, no not in trifles"; and he ends quaintly: "Well, my little Philip, this is enough for me, and I feare too much for you." If my Lord President had not also been my Lord Deputy of Ireland one might have loved him nearly as much as his son.

Neither he nor Philip ever saw the timbered gatehouse that stands opposite to the Old School Buildings, but in the red Council

House to which it leads, Sir Henry always stayed when he made official visits to Shrewsbury. There were fine doings on these occasions; banquets and processions, with "knightly robes most valiant," and many scarlet gowns; masquerades, too, by the boys of the school, who appeared now as soldiers, now as nymphs, and made orations in both characters. Later on the same red house sheltered Charles I., when he came here to collect men and money. Half the plate in the county disappeared into his mint, which was set up, some say, in a little tottering house that may still be seen in an alley on Pride Hill—a fragment of green and weather-worn stone that is one of the most picturesque things in Shrewsbury. Some of the money that Charles "borrowed" on this occasion was well spent in repairing the Castle, which is quite near the Council House. The Castle is now a private dwelling, and one cannot walk about the grounds without permission; but the oldest part of it is the great entrance-gate, which all may see; the gate that was built by Roger de Montgomery and attacked by Stephen; the gate through which Henry IV.

rode out to the famous Battle of Shrewsbury. The Castle itself, as it now stands, was probably mostly built by Edward I.; but it suffered so much through the centuries from siege, and treachery, and time, that many repairs were necessary to secure it a peaceful old age as a dwelling-house. Every motorist who is properly grateful to his benefactors, will be interested to know that it was the engineer Telford who carried out these repairs. He actually lived in the Castle for a time, I believe, and he certainly built the "Laura" tower, which stands on the foundations of the old watch-tower. Telford was in Shrewsbury when the tower of Old St. Chad's showed signs of collapsing, and, on his advice being asked, said the church should be repaired without delay. The Parish Vestry begged him to meet them in St. Chad's to discuss the matter, and demurred so long at the expense that at last Telford walked out of the church, saying grimly that he would rather talk the matter over in some place where there was less danger of the roof falling on his head. Two or three days later it fell.

Not far from the fragments of this ruined church is the High Street, where are some of the oldest and prettiest houses in the town; and hard by is the Tudor market-place, with its statue of Richard, Duke of York. The claims of the Unitarian chapel in the same street are not based on beauty, but on the fact that Coleridge's voice once rose in it "like a steam of rich distilled perfumes," according to William Hazlitt, who had walked ten miles to hear Coleridge preach here, and was as much delighted, he says, "as if he had heard the music of the spheres." Charles Darwin attended the services of this chapel as a boy, but was baptized in New St. Chad's, the eighteenth-century church near the Quarry, within whose classical walls Dr. Johnson once worshipped. The Doctor's famous rolling walk, too, of which we have all heard so much, was once seen under the splendid limes of the Quarry.

As we entered Shrewsbury by the English Bridge we caught a glimpse of the Abbey behind us. Leaving the town by the London Road, on our way to see something of the

Photo by] [*W. D. Haydon.*

OLD STREET IN SHREWSBURY.

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RICHARD BAXTER'S HOUSE, EATON CONSTANTINE.

eastern side of the county, we shall pass close by the old red building that was partly spared when Roger de Montgomery's great monastery was dissolved. It will be worth while to stop the engine for a moment, and to look at the massive Norman piers of the nave, the fine altar-tombs, and the fragment of St. Winifred's shrine. The founder himself was buried here, after a long life of storm and stress, and three days in a monk's habit; but the knightly figure that has been thought to represent him is said by the best authorities to be of a later date than his. This Roger is very prominent in Shropshire history, and is, indeed, not unknown in that of England, for he figured in the Battle of Hastings, and wherever he figured he made himself felt. We hear many conflicting things of his character, but from them all we gather that he was a typical man of his day, spending his time chiefly in acquiring his neighbour's goods, and his leisure moments in building abbeys. Having built this Abbey of Shrewsbury he was careful to see that other people enriched it, and it soon became one of the most important in England. Its

actual buildings covered ten acres: yet now all of it that we can see is this restored church, and, across the road, a relic of a later date. There, in the din and dust of a coal-yard, stands the graceful stone pulpit that was once in the refectory wall. From under its delicately carved canopy a lay brother read pious works aloud to the monks while they ate.

As we drive up the Abbey Foregate, between the trees and old houses, the memory of the Benedictines is with us still; for it was down this road that the monks, with their abbot at their head, came once in solemn procession with the bones of St. Winifred. These, by the combined use of a smooth tongue and a stout spade, they had brought triumphantly away from the churchyard of a Welsh village, knowing full well that no wealth of lands and churches enriched a monastery so surely as a handful of saintly dust.

At the top of the Foregate is the column on which Lord Hill stands above a list of his battles. Here we keep to the London Road, and are soon in the open country.

We are bound for Boscobel, but as there is a good deal to be seen on the way, a round of forty-three miles is not as short as it seems. Between Shrewsbury and Atcham the scenery is not particularly interesting, but the road is level and the surface good, so we have our compensations. From the picturesque bridge at Atcham there is a lovely view of distant Caradoc, with the Severn in the foreground, and on the river bank the old church that is said to have been largely built, like that at Wroxeter, of the stones from the Roman city of Uriconium. We are very near that city now. If we take the first turn to the right after leaving Atcham, we shall soon be actually passing over the ashes of "the White Town in the Woodland," as it was called by the Welsh poet who sang of its tragic end; and a moment later we shall see, near the roadside, a fragment of the wall of its basilica. By asking for the key at a cottage close at hand, and by paying sixpence, we may see also the remains of its public baths, and a piece of tesselated pavement that might have been laid down yesterday. Many relics of this town that

was built by the Romans, inhabited by the British, and burnt by the Saxons, have been found within the limits of the hundred and seventy acres that it once covered: skeletons of men and women crouching where they had vainly sought safety in the hypocausts of the burning baths; coins scattered by fugitives; pathetic trifles of women's dress—hairpins, buckles, and a brooch whose pin still works. Older than these are the urns and tombstones found in the Roman cemetery; the tombstone of Petronius, who is thought to have taken part in the victory over Boadicea; and that of "Placida, aged fifty-four, raised by the care of her husband." Most of the relics have been moved, for safe keeping, to the Museum in Shrewsbury.

From Uriconium a very pretty road leads us to Buildwas. The Severn winds below us on the right, and on the hillside to the left is the little village of Eaton Constantine, which Constantine the Norman—who also gave his name to the Côtentin in France—held in the days of Domesday Book at a rental of a pair of white gloves, valued at one penny. Even at this

distance is visible the black-and-white gable of the farmhouse that was once the home of Richard Baxter, author of "The Saints' Everlasting Rest," and an amazing number of other books—enough, said Judge Jeffreys, "to load a cart." Dr. Johnson, however, pronounced them to be "all good." Here, we learn, Baxter "passed away his Childhood and Youth, which upon Reflection he, according to the Wise Man's Censure, found to be vanity." In spite of these austere views, however, his childhood was not without its wild oats, for we are told that he "joyn'd sometimes with other Naughty Boys in Robbing his Neighbours' Orchards of their Fruit, when he had eno' at home . . . and was bewitched with a love of Romances and Idle Tales."

Presently, after passing through the pretty village of Leighton-under-the-Wrekin, we see Buildwas, the Shelter near the Water, on the further side of the river. Perhaps this is the most striking view of the fourteen massive pillars of this roofless nave, in which the Cistercians of the twelfth century austerely worshipped; but

we can visit the ruins if we wish to do so by crossing the bridge that has quite recently superseded one built by Telford. There is not very much more to be seen at close quarters than from here: the great charm of Buildwas lies in its effect as a whole, in its simplicity and strength, and in its position by the river.

About a mile beyond Buildwas is Ironbridge, named from the first bridge ever built in England of iron, which here spans the Severn at a height of forty feet, by a single arch of a hundred feet in width. It was the work of Abraham Darby, the third of his name, and was finished in 1779. A gradient of 1 in 10 takes us through Ironbridge, and less than two miles further on is Madeley, which appears at first sight the very type of all that is unromantic, a prey to coal-dust and miners; yet if we turn off the main road to the left we shall presently find, hidden in a hollow near Madeley Court Station, as poetic a spot as we shall see in many a day's journey. Perhaps its very contrast to its surroundings adds to its

Photo by] [*W. D. Haydon.*

BUILDWAS ABBEY.

UNIV. OF MICH.

MADELEY COURT.

charm; perhaps to some it may not seem charming at all, but merely a tumble-down, ill-kept house. But to others this little nook, with the weather-stained, crumbling walls and tiled gables of the Court House, the swinging ivy, the still pond, the bulrushes and water-lilies, and the red-and-black timbered barn that once sheltered a fugitive king, are a "faery land forlorn," the very home of glamour and romance. Here Charles II. arrived one night, dressed in green breeches and a noggen shirt. He was tired and hungry, his hands and face were smudged with soot, and he answered to the name of William Jones. He was refreshed in this house, and spent the next day in the barn with Richard Penderel, one of the five brothers to whom he owed his safety. When night fell he walked to Boscobel.

It was hours before he was there, whereas we, if we were as much hurried as he was, might be there in half an hour or so. But though there is nothing to keep us at Shifnal we must pause at Tong, where there are some especially pretty

timbered cottages and a church that is really remarkable, for it contains a collection of tombs which I should imagine to be unequalled in a village church. They are those of the Vernon family, and among them is that of Dame Margaret Stanley, the sister of Dorothy Vernon, of Haddon Hall. Charles Dickens said himself that it was of Tong Village he was thinking when he wrote the end of "The Old Curiosity Shop," and those to whom Little Nell appeals may think of her and her grandfather in the porch of this church. Some of us, however, will take more interest in the shot-marks that have scarred the northern wall ever since the days of the Civil War.

In a park near the village stands the astonishing structure called Tong Castle. It was once a real castle of stone; in the sixteenth century Sir Henry Vernon rebuilt it of brick; in the eighteenth a new owner thought that Moorish cupolas would make a pretty finish to it. When, in 1643, it was in the possession of the Parliamentarians, it was said on that account to be a "great

eye-sore to his Majesty's good subjects who pass'd yt road." For other reasons it is so still.

A writer of the seventeenth century describes Boscobel as "a very obscure habitation, situate in a kind of wilderness"; and no doubt it was to this obscurity that Charles II. owed his safety. Even to-day it is wonderfully isolated, and we reach it by a series of rather circuitous by-roads; but we can drive right up to the house, and leave our car in a safe enclosure, while we walk a hundred yards to the Royal Oak—not the original "asylum of the most potent prince King Charles II. . . . the oak beloved by Jove," * which was mostly made into snuff-boxes and other treasures for the loyal—but an oak grown from an acorn of that "fortunate tree." When Charles reached Boscobel at three o'clock in the morning he was taken into the big panelled room that we shall presently see, and was refreshed with bread and cheese and a posset of milk and beer. Colonel Carlis, another fugitive

* Latin inscription on the wall that used to surround the tree.—DUKE'S VERSION.

from Worcester, "pulled off his Majesty's shoos, which were full of gravel, and stockens which were very wet," and at day-break went with him into the wood, where they both climbed into the oak—here, where we are standing—with a cushion for his Majesty to sit on. Here, for a great part of the day, the tired King slept with his head on Colonel Carlis's knee. "He bore all these hardships and afflictions with incomparable patience," says a contemporary historian. At night he was hidden in the house, buried beneath the garret floor in a box-like priest's-hole, with a load of cheese on the lid. We may climb the stairs and see it; get into it if we will—and ask ourselves if, after spending a night in it, we should be as light-hearted as this man who at any moment might lose his life and had already lost everything else. In the morning he called for a frying-pan and butter, and, having first despatched Colonel Carlis with a dagger to slaughter a neighbour's sheep, he gaily cooked himself some mutton collops, while the Colonel, "being but

under-cook (and that honour enough too), made the fire and turned the collops in the pan."

From Boscobel we strike due north to Ivetsey Bank, where we shall find an inn capable of providing a good, if homely, luncheon or tea. Thence sixteen miles on Watling Street will bring us without a pause (*unberufen!*) through Wellington to the point where we left the main road on our outward journey. It is worth while, by the way, to avoid the unpleasant bit of road through Oakengates by striking across to the main road from Shifnal; to do which we must take a turn in St. George's, where a lamp-post stands out prominently. We enter Shrewsbury, as we left it, by the London Road.

A slightly longer run, covering about fifty miles altogether, will show us something of the northern part of the county on its western side. We drive out of the town past the station and through the squalid suburb of Ditherington, where, for love of our springs and of humanity, we must

perforce drive slowly, by reason of the bumpiness of the surface and the phenomenal number of children. Over this ground rode Henry IV. and Prince Hal to the Battle of Shrewsbury, and there on our right is Haughmond Hill, the "busky hill" to which Shakespeare refers. Presently there appears on the left, a few hundred yards away from the road, the church of Battlefield, raised, with the exception of the tower, quite soon after the battle on the spot where the fight raged most fiercely, in order that masses might be sung perpetually "for the prosperity of the King and the souls of the slain." Here Harry Hotspur died, and with him thousands of others both gentle and simple, for this was a very notable fight and many interests were concerned in it. Beneath the mounds that we see on the south side of the church are the bones of many of the slain. The King "had many marching in his coats," as Hotspur puts it in "Henry IV.," and as they were killed in mistake for him he saved himself by a device more ingenious than kingly.

There is nothing of special note between

Battlefield and Hawkestone, which is about twelve miles from Shrewsbury, and is a private park, open to visitors. In the rhododendron season it is well worth while to leave one's car at the extremely nice hotel at the outskirts of the park, and to walk about a mile through pretty grounds swarming with black rabbits, to see the blaze of blossom for which Hawkestone is famous. And yet I think they will fare still better who choose the time of bluebells. These should drive through the park by the public road. Beyond the gate, where the stream is close to them on the right and woods slope to its edge, they will see, bright in the near foreground but fading away into the distance under the trees in a misty cloud, a soft, ethereal veil of grey-blue. Here and there the green breaks through, and the flowers look like wisps of smoke trailing across the grass. This wonderful sheet of mystic blue borders the river and the road for some way, till the wood ends suddenly, and Hodnet Hall comes in sight.

One really grows a little tired of recording the picturesqueness of Shropshire villages.

They are nearly all pretty: for the houses, when they are not of timber and plaster, are often built of the warm red sandstone that is the stone of the county and acquires such soft, mellow colours in its old age. But I sometimes think Hodnet is the prettiest village of them all. Half the houses are black-and-white; and near the church gate a group of timber gables, with the octagonal tower in the background, forms a complete and perfectly composed picture. Bishop Reginald Heber, the author of "From Greenland's icy mountains," was rector of Hodnet for some years before he sailed for "India's coral strand."

From Hodnet we may either drive back to Shrewsbury or turn to the left in the middle of the village and take a run of about thirty-four miles by Market Drayton and Newport, two picturesque old towns with a good road between them. The scenery in this part of the county is pleasing, but not especially striking. If we choose this way we shall, as we draw near Shrewsbury, pass the ruins of Haughmond, one of the great Shropshire abbeys.

Long ago there was a hermitage at the foot of this "busky hill"; before William

FitzAlan's monastery for Austin Canons rose here, with the great church that has practically disappeared,* and the tall gable with the turrets that are so conspicuous to-day, and the chapter-house with the beautiful doorway. This Abbey was greatly patronised by royalty. Stephen gave it a mill, Matilda gave it lands "for the remission of her sins," Henry II. gave churches, and Henry III. more land, and Llewelyn of Wales "a moiety of Kenwicke." The list of other benefactions is endless: mills and fisheries, churches and markets, woods and hogs and herds. Many were the "privileges of flesh and fish" enjoyed by the canons of Haughmond; and Abbot Nicholas, in Edward III.'s time, desiring to make the most of all these luxuries, built a new kitchen for the brethren and "appointed them a cook to dress their food." It was in 1541 that Henry VIII., as his manner was, took possession of Haughmond and all its riches, "beyng mynded to take the same into his own handes for a better

* Since these words were written there have been extensive excavations at Haughmond, by which important disclosures have been made.

purpose"; and so the minster, for which he had no use, gradually vanished. Nothing is left of it but a fragment of wall and a doorway. Two tombs that were once within the chancel now lie open to the sky on the hillside, where their appeal for the prayers of the passers-by is of far more pathetic force than it ever was under the shelter of the Abbey's roof:—

"*Vous Ki Passez Par Ici Priez Pur L'Alme Johan Fitz Aleine Ki Git Ici. Deu De Sa Alme Eit Merci. Amen.*"

"*Isabel De Mortimer Sa Femme Acost De Li. Deu De Lur Alme Eit Merci. Amen.*"

From this road near Haughmond we have perhaps the loveliest view of distant Shrewsbury. The pale hills rim the horizon, the river winds in the foreground, and between them rise the clear outlines of the two incomparable spires that crown The Delight.

Another of the Shropshire monasteries that must certainly be seen is Wenlock Priory, which lies on the way to Bridgnorth. It is a fairly level road that leads to it by Cross Houses and Cound and pretty Cressage, which

HAUGHMOND ABBEY.

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Photo by [*W. D. Haydon.*

WENLOCK PRIORY, ST. JOHN'S CHAPEL.

in Domesday Book is Cristes-ache, or Christ's Oak. Christianity was preached here, it is said, under an old oak-tree, in days so early that when St. Augustine visited the place he found it already Christian. Between Harley and Wenlock there is a hill which the Contour Book describes with perfect accuracy as "a precipitous hill on which innumerable accidents have happened." The accidents, I fancy, have mostly happened to horse-drawn vehicles and bicycles—especially the latter—when descending the hill, for it is a mile long and has a turn in the middle. There is no reason why it should inconvenience a good car, for the average gradient is nothing more alarming than 1 in 8, and it is well worth climbing for the sake of the wide view from the top, just beyond which Much Wenlock lies.

Milburga, Saxon princess and saint, built the first religious house at Wenlock, and became its abbess, and was finally buried within its precincts. William of Malmesbury tells us how, long after her death, she enriched the place to which she had given her life and all she possessed. "Milburga," he

says, "reposes at Wenlock . . . but for some time after the arrival of the Normans, through ignorance of the place of her burial, she was neglected. Lately, however, a convent of Clugniac monks being established there, while a new church was erecting, a certain boy, running violently along the pavement, broke into the hollow of the vault, and discovered the body of the virgin, when a balsamic odour pervading the whole church, she was taken up, and performed so many miracles that the people flocked thither in great multitudes. Large spreading plains could hardly contain the troops of pilgrims, while rich and poor came side by side, one common faith compelling all."

The convent of Clugniac monks in question was built by that notable man Roger de Montgomery, and was the same whose ruins speak so plainly to-day of the ornate tastes of the monks of Clugny. We saw no arcaded walls such as these of the chapter-house, nor richly moulded doorways, nor any such elaborate ornament at Cistercian Buildwas, whose lands marched with the lands of this Priory, and whose monks found the Rule of

Clugny too soft, the tastes of Clugny too enervating. Go to Wenlock in the spring, when its slender columns rise above a sea of sweet-scented flowers, and its old wall is bright with rock-plants—for the Priory stands in private grounds and is cared for like a garden. It is the third religious house that has stood on this spot, for between the days of Milburga, the royal saint, and those of Roger and his Clugniacs, there was another monastery founded here by Leofric of Mercia and his wife Godiva, a well-loved woman whom we are glad to connect with this beautiful spot. The picturesque old Prior's Lodge is inhabited, and it is only on Tuesdays and Fridays that the world at large is admitted to the ruins. Perhaps nothing recalls to one so vividly the daily life of the monks in this place as the long causeway that stretches across the field near the Priory garden. It was here that the brothers took their daily exercise, raised above the surrounding marsh—a long procession of dark figures, walking slowly to and fro—and among them, unsuspected, that interesting swashbuckler of whom we long to hear more,

that man of extremes whose strange career is all summed up for us in one short, pregnant sentence. "In 1283," we learn, "a brother of Wenlac became a captain of banditti." We hear no more of him, alas! except that he was hanged.

The road to Bridgnorth is a continuation of the one by which we entered the town, so we must drive back, past the beautiful old Guildhall and market-place, up the street to the Gaskell Arms, where we may have luncheon if, as may well occur to motorists, we are too hungry to wait till we reach the more imposing "Crown" at Bridgnorth. At the Gaskell Arms we turn sharply to the left, and thence eight or nine miles of good road, with several steep hills, will bring us to Bridgnorth.

Ever since the Danes built a fort here this town, nearly as consistently as Shrewsbury and Ludlow, has concerned itself with history. It has been visited by half the kings of England. Henry I. besieged it; Henry II. defended it; John and Edward I. stayed in it; Edward II. took refuge in it; Henry IV. gathered his army here on his

Photo by] [*W. D. Haydon.*

WENLOCK PRIORY, CHAPTER HOUSE.

UNIV. OF WICH.

BISHOP PERCY'S BIRTHPLACE, BRIDGNORTH.

way to the Battle of Shrewsbury; Charles I. was besieged here by Cromwell, who narrowly escaped death before the walls. The Castle, of course, was the centre of interest on all these occasions—the Castle that was built so hurriedly by Robert de Belesme, Roger de Montgomery's son, and is now so conspicuous on account of its leaning tower. Round its ruins is a path that must be practically the same as that which Charles I. declared to be as pleasant a walk as any in his kingdom. Robert de Belesme, who has been described with apparent justice as "an implacable villain," also founded the church of St. Mary Magdalene, but the present building was designed by Telford. Another interesting church is St. Leonard's, where in the churchyard the Roundheads once beat the Royalists in a skirmish, and where Richard Baxter was a curate. He lived in the little black-and-white cottage close at hand, and seems to have had a poor opinion of his flock. "He found the people here generally ignorant and dead-hearted," he says, ". . . so that though by his first Labours among them he was Instrumental

in the Conversion of several Persons, and was generally Applauded, yet . . . Tippling and Ill Company rendred his Preaching ineffectual." If his preaching was ineffectual it at all events began early, for "when he was a little Boy in Coats, if he heard other Children in Play speak Profane Words he would reprove them, to the wonder of those that heard him." At this time—when he was a little Boy in Coats—he lived at Rowton in this county; it was not till he was ten years old that he moved to Eaton Constantine and indulged in dark deeds in his neighbours' orchards.

An extremely steep dip with an awkward corner in the middle of it will take us to the birthplace of another famous divine, Bishop Percy, best known in connection with "Percy's Reliques." The house, which stands in the Cartway, may be approached quite comfortably from below, and is worth seeing for its own sake, being a good example of black-and-white work.

Our best way home from here is by Ironbridge and Buildwas, on the road by which we drove to Boscobel. Between

Bridgnorth and Ironbridge some of the country is pretty, and at Broseley especially it must have been lovely in its natural state, before it was ruined by the potteries. We cross the river by Abraham Darby's iron bridge.

A run of forty-seven miles or so, by Wem, Whitchurch, and Ellesmere, will show us a good deal of the north-west part of the county, and if, when we reach Whitchurch, we choose to lengthen the distance to fifty-four miles by slipping over the Welsh border to Overton and Erbistock, we shall not regret it.

We leave Shrewsbury by the road that branches to the left immediately opposite to the station. Almost at once, at the point where the road touches the Severn, we pass a long, low house of timber and plaster on our right. It was from this house that Admiral Benbow ran away to sea. He was living here as an apprentice, to his father or another, and, since it was the custom to entrust the house-key to the care of the apprentice, he had, fortunately

for himself and England, special facilities for making his escape. He hid the key in the tree that is marked with a ring of whitewash, and stands between the house and the railings; and there to this day it hangs.

Between Shrewsbury and Whitchurch there is nothing of particular interest except the old farmhouse called Albright Hussey, which stands in a field on the right about three miles out of Shrewsbury. It is a pretty old moated house, partly black-and-white; but its greatest beauty is within, where there is as charming a room as one need wish to see, a room to make a housewife weep tears of covetousness—low, oblong, oak-panelled to the ceiling, with seats in the mullioned windows and a carved fireplace. The house is inhabited, but I believe there is never any difficulty in obtaining leave to see it. Its sixteenth-century walls were once threatened by a party of Parliamentarian horse. There were only eight men to defend the place, but their leader was a crafty man, and shouted his orders aloud within hearing of the

enemy. "Let ten men stay here, and ten go there, and twenty stay with me!" he cried; and the attacking force, dismayed by the number of mythical defenders, rode away and left the stone and timber, the mullioned windows and oaken wainscotes, to be a joy to us to-day.

In Wem, however, through which we presently pass, it was the "Parliament men" who were in the ascendent. The place acted a prominent part in the Civil War, and has a history many centuries long, but on the surface is commonplace enough. In the List of the Owners of the Manor of Wem the twenty-fourth name is the grim one of "Sir George Jeffreys, Knight and Baronet, and Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench, created in 1685 a peer of England by the style and title of Baron Jeffreys of Wem."

At Whitchurch we must draw up at the door of St. Alkmund's Church; not because it is old or beautiful, for the original church fell down in 1711 and was entirely rebuilt; nor because Dean Swift subscribed to the rebuilding of it; but because it contains the

dust of the great Talbot, first Earl of Shrewsbury, "the scourge of France." His valiant heart lies beneath the white stone in the porch, where careless thousands have trodden it underfoot. It was found there in an urn when the church was rebuilt, and with it were some figures of Christ and the Virgin Mary from Talbot's rosary. His bones are in the chancel, whither, about fifty years after his death, they were brought from the battlefield of Chastillon, where a little chapel had been raised on the spot where he fell.* His effigy lies on a tomb that is an exact copy of the original one. While this restoration was in progress the bones of the great soldier were shown to the public, with the skull cleft by the axe that killed him. "This is that terrible Talbot," says Thomas Fuller, "so famous for his sword . . . which constantly conquered where it came, insomuch that the bare fame of his approach frighted the French from the siege of Bordeaux. Being

* Transactions of the Archæological Society of Shropshire.

victorious for twenty-four years together, success failed him at last. . . . Henceforward we may say 'Good-night to the English in France,' whose victories were buried with the body of this earl."

From Whitchurch we drive about fourteen miles in a westerly direction to Overton Bridge, by Hanmer and Overton village, a pretty little place with a churchyard surrounded by yew-trees. Having crossed the bridge, which is about two miles beyond the village, we turn to the left at right angles and approach Erbistock by a road whose greatest recommendation to inveterate lovers of speed will be that it is short. After one experience, however, most of us will agree, I think, that this by-road needs no recommendation but the fact that it leads to Erbistock. A tiny church and a tiny inn at the brim of the Dee—that is all that there is at Erbistock. But it is all enclosed in trees, and the trees dip into the river, and the river is rather big and gentle and gurgles sweetly at one's feet, and the woods on the other side are tangled and mysterious and full of fairies. One may have one's

tea close beside the water, or one may cross the river in a ferry, and soon be quite alone in the woods. There is no need to hurry, for when we leave Erbistock we need not stop again till we reach Shrewsbury.

For Ellesmere, "wher was a castelle," says Leland, "and very fair polis yet be," has now nothing left of its castle but the memory of it, and the fair pools may be seen as we pass. More than once Ellesmere was given as a dowry to the daughters of English kings, on their marriage with Cymric princes; for as the rulers of the two countries were sure to fall out soon after the wedding the gift was quickly taken back by the donor, and so was ready for the next bride. Thus, though Henry II. gave it to his sister Emma, there was nothing to prevent King John from giving it to his daughter Joan, twenty-seven years later, when she married Llewelyn the Great.

I think it must have been beside the lake, where on the level ground there would be room for the dramatic scene, that Rupert, halting here at Ellesmere, made his prisoners cast lots upon the drum to decide which of

them should die. Thirteen were doomed; but at the last moment one of them was saved by Sir Vincent Corbet, who as he rode past interceded for the man, who had been a servant in his family. The rest were hanged there and then. Yet it is not they who haunt the rushy banks of the mere; but the White Lady of Oteley. Long ago, it is said, she robbed and ruined a monastery, and built herself a home here with the spoils—a home that she has never left since then, except to walk by night along the margin of the water. She was not even allowed to move to the new house when it was built about a hundred years ago, for a fragment of the old one was left standing in the park on purpose for her accommodation. The new house faces us very conspicuously as we drive close beside the water on the opposite side of the mere, and go on our way to Shrewsbury, which is about sixteen miles away.

In the south-west, which is the hilliest, and therefore the prettiest, part of Shropshire, there is a variety of little runs, which

may be lengthened or shortened according to circumstances and tastes. A pretty round of about fifty miles is by Chirbury and Bishop's Castle, whence either of two lovely roads will bring us back to Shrewsbury. Nineteen miles of nearly level road lead to Chirbury through several villages—Westbury, Worthen, Marton, and others—all of which are fairly picturesque, but with nothing very noteworthy about them. Just before Marton is reached there is an exceedingly sharp turn, which should be borne in mind. At Chirbury our road turns to the left in the middle of the village.

The name of this obscure little place has been known to the world for some centuries in connection with that strange person Lord Herbert of Chirbury, half ruffler, half scholar, who in a house only a few miles from here, across the Welsh border, wrote the famous autobiography that Horace Walpole called "perhaps the most extraordinary account that was ever given seriously by a wise man of himself." His home for the greater part of his life, when he was not seeking adventures and duels in

France or London, was in Montgomery Castle, whose ruins we may see by driving four miles further. Nothing but a fragment is left of it now, but when the Herberts lived there it must have been a fine sight on its wild crag; a more fitting home for Edward the soldier than for his gentler and still more famous brother George. Chirbury itself had a castle and a priory once; but of the castle, which was built by the ever active Ethelfleda, nothing remains but the site; and of the monastery there are only fragments left, for the present church, ancient as it is, was not used by the monks, but was then, as now, the parish church.* It has seen strange doings. It is hard to realise, when the bells ring in this lonely little village, and the quiet country folk take their seats for the morning service, that here within these very walls the congregation of Chirbury was once electrified by the clashing of armour and the clatter of horses' hoofs in the aisle. It was during the Civil War, and Mr. Edward Lewis, "a very goodly man, did preach twice a day";

* Transactions of the Archæological Society of Shropshire.

a rash thing for a Puritan to do when Captain Corbet was no further off than Caus Castle. A party of Royalist horse "rode into the church to the great fright and amazement of the people; and with their pistols charged and cocked went up into the pulpit and pulled down Mr. Lewis, pulling and tugging him in a most unworthy manner . . . and so left the people without their pastor because they would not be content with one sermon a day."

It was this same Edward Lewis who brought to Chirbury the chained library that almost certainly belonged to George Herbert; for Isaac Walton tells us of "a choice library which Mr. Herbert had fastened with chains in a fit room in Montgomery Castle." This choice library contains books dating from 1530 to 1684, and among them is a black-letter folio copy of Chaucer. They are kept in the vicarage, and I believe may be seen by any one.

Turning to the left in Chirbury we soon pass Marrington Hall, or *Havodwen*, the White Summer-house, as the Welsh call it; a very fine example of sixteenth-century

black-and-white work. The lovely little valley beyond it is Marrington Dingle, and a mile or two further on is Churchstoke. It is in this pretty part of Shropshire that the uses of the motor-car are especially noticeable, for railway stations are few and distant from each other, and the hilliness of the country is not encouraging to bicyclists. Of Bishop's Castle there is little to be said, for pretty as the country is all round it, the town itself is unattractive, and the castle is no more. But all the ways back to Shrewsbury from here are lovely. We may join the Stretton road, which we already know, at Marshbrook, and so see one of the most charming little bits of wooded country in Shropshire; or we may follow the hilly road through the wild scenery near Ratlinghope, down Cothercott Hill, and through Longden and Hookagate. Cothercott Hill is very steep and has a bad surface, but it is only for a short way that the gradient is really severe, and the view from the top is one of the wildest in the country. Personally, however, I should recommend the third way back to Shrewsbury—over

the moor to the Roman Gravels, and down through the woods of the winding Hope Valley to Minsterley.

As there is nothing in the whole of this little run to delay us, we may lengthen it, if our car is good on hills and we are of an enterprising temperament, by going on from Bishop's Castle to Clun, or even to Knighton, and round by Lientwardine to join the Ludlow road. This is a beautiful bit of country, and full of interest. Leland tells us of the "faire forest of Clun." "Cumming from Bisshop's Castelle to Clunne lordshippe," he says, "cummeth doune a greate woode grouing on a hille." Much of this great wood is gone now, but there is still enough to make the country very "faire," and to compensate a motorist for the climbing of a long hill. Suddenly, as we round a corner, Clun comes into sight between two hills, with the stern tower of its castle standing conspicuously above the river. "Clunne Castell," says Leland, "longynge to the Erle of Arundel, sumewhat ruinus. It hath bene bothe stronge and well builded." It is more than somewhat

ruinous now, which is hardly surprising when one considers all it has gone through at the hands of Welshmen and Round heads since it was built in Stephen's reign. There is a story that the stones of which it is made were passed from hand to hand by a chain of men, from the quarry, a mile away, to the river-bank where the castle stands; but be that as it may, these crumbling stones, with their soft tints of grey and yellow, embody enough romance to satisfy us, I think, seeing that they are connected with all the greatest names of Wales. They have been stormed and burnt by Rhys of the south; they have been attacked in vain by great Llewelyn of the north; they have been overcome by Owen Glyndwr. They are connected with modern romance, too, for it is supposed that the "Garde Dolareuse," in the "Betrothed," represents the Castle of Clun, and the Buffalo Inn claims to have sheltered Sir Walter Scott while he was writing part of the book.

Everything is old at Clun: the church; the fine old bridge, of whose building there is

no record; and the "Hospital of the Holy and Undivided Trinity at Clunn," which was founded by the Duke of Norfolk in 1614 for distressed tradesmen, who were each to receive yearly "a gown ready-made of strong cloth or kersey, of a sad colour."

The road between Clun and Knighton is not one to be undertaken lightly by small cars of uncertain hill-climbing powers, for it is mostly composed of long and precipitous hills, with gradients varying from 1 in 8 to 1 in 10; but the surface is good, and though the scenery is not particularly interesting at first, it becomes really lovely as we draw near Knighton, which lies in a valley, surrounded by wooded hills. Here we turn to the left, and by way of compensation the road from Knighton to Leintwardine is particularly level, along a narrow valley between green hills that belong to Shropshire on the left and to Herefordshire on the right. As the valley widens out into open country we reach Brampton Brian, associated for ever with the name of Brilliana, Lady Harley. That gallant-hearted lady was alone in her husband's castle of

Brampton when it was threatened by the forces of Charles I., for the Harleys were "Parliament men." "I acknowleg," she writes, "I doe not thinke meself safe wheare I am." Safe she certainly was not, but she thanked God that she was "not afraide"; and when the Royalists bade her surrender she simply answered, "I must endeavour to keep what is mine as well as I can, in which I have the law of nature, of reason, and of the law on my side, and you none to take it from me." The siege lasted some weeks, and Lady Harley, always delicate, suffered greatly; but when pressed to yield said "she would rather choose an honourable death." She died; but this first siege was raised before her "heavenly and happy end," and so she never knew that the castle was besieged again, was surrendered, and burnt to the ground.*

A few miles further on is Leintwardine, which I believe to be full of antiquarian interest, and know to be picturesque as an artist's dream; and here, if we care to face a narrow byway with a rough surface, we

* *Gentleman's Magazine*, August, 1906.

may leave the main road and take the more direct route to Craven Arms by way of Clungunford. At Craven Arms we rejoin the road from Ludlow to Shrewsbury.

Of the many main roads that converge in Shrewsbury I have left to the last the one that is in some ways the most important, the one that is certainly the most famous; that road of great memories and great achievement, by which so many Royal Mails have travelled breathlessly at the dashing pace of eleven miles an hour, and by which we may travel to-day at a pace that nothing shall induce me to betray: Telford's road to Holyhead. It is the road by which, if we are fortunate, we are going into North Wales. If, however, it is our sad fate to turn our backs on that most beautiful land, we must on no account neglect to run over to Llangollen, a distance of thirty miles: for though I have left it to the last on the assumption that we are going on to Wales, it is one of the most enjoyable drives in this neighbourhood.

We leave Shrewsbury by the Welsh

Bridge, the scene of Henry VII.'s remarkable entry into the town over the body of the stout, wise bailiff; and as we reach the top of the hill beyond it we pass on the right the house in which Charles Darwin was born. At the corner where the Holyhead road turns sharply to the right, about half a mile beyond the last houses of the town, there stands in a private garden a famous tree known as the Shelton Oak. I mention it merely because its fame rests on a libel. There are those who will tell you —cheerfully taking a great man's name in vain—that Owen Glyndwr sat in this tree watching the Battle of Shrewsbury when he should have been taking part in it. Our knowledge of this fiery prince's characteristics might be enough, one would think, to discredit the tale, without the proved fact that he was extremely occupied in South Wales at the time! But still the tale is told.

Soon, at Montford Bridge, we cross the Severn, white with water-weeds in the summer, and fringed with purple wild-flowers, and then, with what speed we may, spin

happily towards the Welsh hills. We can see them on our left; the striking outline of the Breidden, with Rodney's Pillar on its topmost point, and beyond it a long blue range that limits all the western horizon. At one spot only we have a choice of roads. Telford's road goes by Oswestry, an ancient town with an immense history but few relics; but if at the "Queen's Head," fourteen miles from Shrewsbury, we turn to the right, following the telegraph-posts, we shall cut off more than a mile of distance and shall see Whittington.

There are some places that are peculiarly haunted. One is infinitely more conscious in them of the past than of the present. Such are Hay and Beaupré—both of which we shall see later on. But Whittington is not so much haunted as haunting. Hay and Beaupré are enchanted: Whittington is itself the enchantment. It stands in a clump of trees by the wayside, in the middle of the village, and one comes upon it suddenly: a great fortified gateway of pale grey stone, reflected in the weed-grown water of what was once its moat—and leading nowhere.

One thinks, not of its history, but of itself. One cannot believe that it is merely the entrance to a vanished mediæval castle; it is rather the Gate of Dreams, through which every man sometimes passes in search of his heart's desire.

There is an old Norman-French romance that tells us how the White Tower was built by William Peverel of the Peak, and how he promised it as a dowry to Melette, the fairest of his nieces. "But none found favour with her. And William reasoned with her, and besought her that she would discover unto him if there was in the world any knight whom she would take for lord. . . . 'Certes, Sire,' said she, 'no knight is there in all the world that I would take for the sake of riches and the honour of lands, but if I ever take such an one he shall be handsome, and courteous, and the most valiant of his order in Christendom.'" So William proclaimed a tourney at the Peak, with Melette and the White Tower for the prize; and among those who came to try their fortune was one Guarin de Metz, well clad in red samite, with a crest of gold. "To record the blows and

the issues I am not minded," says the story, "but Guarin de Metz and his company proved that day the best, the fairest, and the most valiant, and above all, Guarin was the most praised in all ways." So Guarin won the fastidious Melette of the White Tower, "and with great joy did he take her, and the damsel him." *

This romance is not very reliable history, I fear, but it is true that Whittington belonged at one time to the Peverels, and later to the Fitz-Warines or Guarins, of whom it was probably the third who built this gate in the reign of John.

Two miles beyond Whittington is Gobowen, where we rejoin the main road; and soon afterwards we dip into the narrow valley below Chirk, and with the railway and the canal high above us on the left, cross the little Ceiriog into Wales.

* "The History of Fulk Fitz-Warine," translated by Alice Kemp-Welch.

WHITTINGTON CASTLE.

THE LLEDR VALLEY, FROM THE HOLYHEAD ROAD.

A TOUR IN NORTH WALES

A TOUR IN NORTH WALES

HERE, on the very border of Wales, one is conscious of the Celtic atmosphere. We left the quiet orderliness of England behind us when we dipped down into this little valley, where the sparkling, bubbling Ceiriog—every inch a Celt—calls to us to follow it up into the hills. And so we will, as soon as we have climbed the other side of the valley into Chirk village; turning there to the left, though our rightful road, the road to Llangollen, lies directly in front of us. In Wales we shall find ourselves constantly tempted to leave the highway, and in most cases we shall be rewarded if we yield to the temptation without ado. In this particular case we shall be rewarded with a dear little glen, feathery birch-trees on the steep slopes, a yellow carpet in prim-

rose time, and a most charming little hotel about six miles up the valley, at Glyn Ceiriog.

Near Chirk the road sweeps round under the trees of the deer-park, where "there is on a smaul hille a mighty large and stronge castel with dyvers towers"; towers that have stood here for many generations, defying time and war; for this castle of Chirk is no ruin like most of its contemporaries, but an inhabited house. Yet not these towers, I believe, but the old Welsh Castell Crogen, stood here when Henry II., with "the chosen warriors of England," and of several other countries, marched up this valley to join battle with the great Owen Gwynedd and all the might of Wales, who were encamped near Corwen. The English, finding the trees in their way, cut them down as they advanced, which so much infuriated some of the Welsh who were separated from their main army, that the Ceiriog ran red with the blood of Henry's chosen warriors. This Battle of Crogen took place just below the older castle.

Perhaps the most dramatic event in the

life of the present Chirk Castle was when it fell into the hands of the cavaliers, and its owner, Sir Thomas Myddleton, a Parliamentary leader, was obliged to besiege his own house in his own person. I believe that on one day of the week the world at large is allowed to pass through the beautiful gates of wrought iron, and up the long slope of the avenue, and into the castle itself, to see all the treasures of art and history that George Borrow saw when he was here: the cabinet of Charles II., and the portraits of Nell Gwynne, and of "the very proud daughter of the house," as Borrow calls Addison's wife, "the Warwick Dowager who married the Spectator, and led him the life of a dog."

Across Chirk Park runs Offa's Dyke, the long embankment "that was cast up with great labour and industry by Offa the Mercian, as a boundary between his Subjects and the Britains, from the mouth of Dee to that of the River Wye. . . . Concerning which Joannes Sarisburiensis in his 'Polycration' saith that Harald establish'd a law that whatever Welshman should be found arm'd on

this side the limit he had set up, then . . . his right hand should be cut off by the King's Officers." It touches the high-road a few miles beyond Chirk, just before we begin the wonderful descent into the Vale of Llangollen; that long slope down which we swing for several miles on a perfect gradient and a perfect surface—marred, however, by an awkward turn—with the whole beautiful valley spread out before us, and the Dee sweeping far below us, spanned by the remarkable aqueduct called Pont-y-Cysylltau. Beyond it rise the Eglwyseg crags, and far away the shattered fortress of Dinas Bran is visible almost from the first on its peak above Llangollen. "The castelle of Dinas Brane," says Leland, "was never a bigge thing, but sette al for strenght as in a place half inaccessible for enemyes." Even in his day it was "al in ruine," and now there is only a fragment left of it to remind us of those princes of ancient Powys who built it in days so old as to be unchronicled, and defied the power of the Saxon from within its walls; and of its owner in later days, Madoc ap

Gryffyth Maelor, who built the Abbey of Valle Crucis; and of the fair Myfanwy, "all smiles and light," who was loved by a poor bard of the fourteenth century, and celebrated by him in a poem that still exists.

At the foot of the crag on which Dinas Bran is perched lies Llangollen—a little town that owes its charm entirely to its position. Only a few miles away, in Shropshire, an ugly house is an exception: in Wales it is unfortunately the rule. A town or village that is really pretty in itself, apart from its surroundings, is almost unknown. But so lovely is the position of Llangollen that in spite of its rather squalid streets it is an entrancing place; so entrancing that Robert Browning lived for some time at the Hand Hotel, and the two famous "Ladies of Llangollen," Lady Eleanor Butler and Miss Ponsonby, chose it out of all the world for their life-long home. Llangollen is still dominated by "the Ladies," almost as much as by Dinas Bran itself. They adorn the windows of all its photograph shops; they shine in crude colours from all its china mugs; and in its churchyard we learn from an extremely ugly

tombstone that one of them, in the opinion of the other, had "manners worthy of her Illustrious Birth." It must be admitted that such is not the impression given by the impartial. It became the fashion for travellers of mark to visit this quaint couple in their house up there on the hill, and they themselves insisted on its being also the fashion to give them presents—carvings, miniatures, curiosities of all kinds. If we care to climb a steep hill we may see the outside of Plas Newydd now, a black-and-white house, which must have been really pretty in its original simplicity, but is now overladen with a mass of carving. From the road we can see the porch in which "the Ladies" once stood "fussing and tottering about in an agony of expectation," waiting for Sir Walter Scott, and looking, says Lockhart, "like a couple of hazy or crazy old sailors." "Who could paint," he goes on, "the prints, the dogs, the cats, the miniatures, the cram of cabinets, clocks, glass-cases, books, bijouterie, dragon-china, nodding mandarins, and whirligigs of every shape and hue—the whole house outside and in *covered* with carved oak . . . and

the illustrated copies of Sir W.'s poems, and the joking, simpering compliments about Waverley." But whether their manners were worthy of their Illustrious Birth or not, they were true friends to each other, and the guardian angels, as Lockhart admits, of Llangollen. It is an interesting fact (which should not be forgotten) that the church under whose shadow they lie is dedicated to St. Collen ap Gwynnawg ap Clydawg ap Cowrda ap Caradog Freichfras ap Llyr Merimap Eini Yrth ap Cunedda Wledig.

Far more important than Plas Newydd or its memories of vanished mandarins and whirligigs is the work of that prince of Powys, whose name I mentioned in connection with Dinas Bran—Madoc ap Gryffyth Maelor. In Pant-y-Groes, or the Valley of the Cross, stands Madoc's ruined abbey, the most perfect retreat, surely, that ever brought comfort to the sad or sinful. It was of the Vale of Llangollen that Ruskin characteristically wrote: "The whole valley, when once I got up past the Works (whatever the accursed business of them) seemed to me entirely lovely in its gentle wildness." And

it is this very quality of gentle wildness that gives such charm to the little Glen of the Cross, which joins the larger valley of the Dee just above Llangollen, and is reached by way of the old stone bridge that was the first of its kind in Wales.

When, in a few minutes, we see the gable of Valle Crucis Abbey below us on the right, we leave our car by the roadside. We leave, indeed, the whole world behind us as we pass through the heavy door by which there was once no returning. The narrow wooded valley hems us in, the trees are close round us, the waters of the fishpond, in their absolute stillness, add to the sense of aloofness and peace. And under our very feet, perhaps, is the dust of Iolo Goch, the famous bard who sang of "Owain Glyndwr, the great, the good"; for Iolo's unmarked grave is here; and here, too, lies Madoc, who built this abbey in the last year of the twelfth century; and Myfanwy, the beautiful princess, "fairer than the cherry's bloom"; and others who died long, long before them. To antiquarians the tombs of Valle Crucis are full of interest, for there are some that

seem to prove, says the custodian—himself an antiquarian—that this Cistercian house rose on the site of an older Benedictine building. The Cistercians never used warlike symbols, but always the sign of the Cross; yet here on two stones of very early date—the sixth or seventh century—are carved the sword, the spear, and the battleaxe. Fragments of stained glass, too, have been unearthed, and coloured tiles, though the Cistercian Rule forbade the use of colour in any form. This austere Order, however, while avoiding the use of the sword as a symbol, was apparently not averse to using it as a weapon on occasion, for it was by fighting the Benedictines in a neighbouring field, according to the custodian's theory, that they became possessed of the site of their abbey. Truth to tell, the extreme austerity of the Cistercians seems to have relaxed in later days, for we hear after a time of four courses of meat in silver dishes at Valle Crucis, and of an abbot with three of his fingers covered with rings. But these are disturbing thoughts. Let us rather take away with us a picture of the quiet fish-

pond, with its water-weeds and clumps of yellow flags, and the gable of the church reflected in it line for line, and on the bank a hooded figure, dressed in white, with a placid face and a busy fishing-rod.

Quite near the abbey in a field is a far older relic, Eliseg's Pillar, the rough stone monument that gave its name to the Valley of the Cross, though as a matter of fact it was probably never a cross. It was once much higher than it is now, but in the days of the Civil War the name of the valley was enough to make it *suspect*, and the pillar was thrown down by the Puritans on the chance of its once having been a cross. It has been much discussed and disagreed about, but at all events its very great antiquity is a certainty, and the inscription that is now illegible was luckily copied several centuries ago. "Concenn," it tells us, "the great grandson of Eliseg, erected this stone to the memory of his great-grandfather, Eliseg. This is that Eliseg who recovered his inheritance of Powis by his sword from the power of the Angles."

Returning to Llangollen we cross the Dee

again and go on our way upon the road to Holyhead, up the ridge of Rhysgog, past Berwyn Station, and so out of the Vale of Llangollen into that of Edeyrnion. The Dee is still below us on the right, with thickly wooded hills beyond it; and on the left are rocky heights, sometimes bare and sometimes softened by trees. We have a lovely run before us down the valley, but if we are prudent we will *drive slowly in the neighbourhood of Corwen.*

But here, at the head of the valley, we are eight miles away from Corwen, and have other things to think of—great things, indeed: the last struggle for Welsh freedom, and the man who was the heart and the head of it, that strange mixture of ruthless vengeance and lovableness, Owen Glyndwr, who as a pattern squire, rather scholarly and very hospitable, spent many quiet years, living sometimes here at Glyndyfrdwy beside the Dee and sometimes at his other house at Sycharth, and then suddenly, at the touch of injustice, unfurled the red dragon of Uther and became the implacable devastator whose name meets us

in every ruin in Wales. Nothing remains now of his house, for Prince Hal descended upon it one day, and, having left it level with the ground, wrote to his "very dear and entirely beloved" Wardens of the Marches to tell them all about it. After describing the burning of Sycharth and of many houses round it he goes on: "Then we went straight away to his other place of Glyndourdy, to seek for him there. There we burnt a fine lodge in his park, and all the country round; and we remained there all that night." Above the spot where the fine lodge stood is a curious tumulus crowned with firs, quite close to the road. It is known as Owen's Mount, not because he made it, for it is far older than he, but because there is a story that he used it as a kind of watch-tower. It was at Corwen, some say, that he first raised his standard; but the other memories of him here are legendary and trivial.

From Corwen to wild Cerrig-y-Druidion—the Rock of the Druids—the road rises steadily, and leads to nothing of note but the lovely little Pass of Glyndyffws, a deep

and narrow defile of sudden unexpected beauty that connects two tracts of rather dull country. Here, where the Ceirw flings itself into the ravine from a great height and foams among the rocks far below us, Telford has thoughtfully supplied us with several little recesses in the wall from which to enjoy the view. I have heard that he cut his name in the stone of one of them, but I have never been able to find it. Perhaps it was to his name that George Borrow objected when he came here and laughed at "Mr. T." for being eager for immortality. There was no need for Telford to be over-anxious about his immortality; nor yet, indeed, was there any for Borrow to flout him because he was not a Welsh bard!

Tyn-y-nant, where "little Dick Vickers," late of Shrewsbury Mail, hanged himself rather exclusively, is a place of a dreary sort; and so is Cerrig-y-Druidion; and so, most of all, is the straight road from Cerrig to Cernioge, a piece of road that catches all the winds of heaven, and always seems longer than it was last time. Open the

throttle here, and be thankful—if the weather be cold—that your good engine is humming before you, and is making a better pace than the eleven miles an hour of which the shivering travellers on this road used to boast. Cernioge is to us merely an unkempt farmhouse, but to them it meant a fire and hot drinks, for it was once a posting-house of considerable renown.

At Cernioge begins the descent into the valley of the Conway; and it is here that we first see, stretched out before us like the Promised Land, the distant grandeur of Snowdonia, the wild, impenetrable fortress of the Welsh and the trap of the invading English. When Pentre Voelas is passed the beauty grows and grows, mile by mile, and we are gently gliding down into the very heart of it; wild crags to the right of us, and before and below us a sea of woodland, valley beyond valley and hill beyond hill. There is one turn of the road where nearly every car draws up. The valley of the Conway lies at our feet, with here and there the river shining through the trees; the Lledr Valley stretches away and merges

into the distant moors; Moel Siabod's peak rises at the end of it; and over Siabod's shoulder appears, on a clear day, a wedge-shaped corner of Snowdon, faintly blue. I have seen this view at many times of the year, and the best time of all is May.

For the woods that are at our feet, the woods that gave its name to Bettws-y-Coed, the Chapel in the Wood, are at their best in May, when every tree has its own individual shade of colour, the larch its tender green, and the budding oak its pink and gold. But, indeed, Bettws is always lovely. Nothing can spoil its innate simplicity; not even the smart hats and parasols that look so incongruous in its little street in July and August. It exists only for tourists; there are several good hotels, and, roughly speaking, all the other houses are lodgings; yet in spite of all, Bettws is a village still. Those who like to settle down comfortably and motor round a centre, instead of touring from place to place, will find this much the most central and convenient spot from which to explore North Wales. And in any case, I think we must stay here for a night or two. We

must drive to Rhuddlan and Conway and Dolwyddelan; we must stand on the Pont-y-Pair and watch the tempestuous Llugwy; we must inspect David Cox's famous sign-board at the Royal Oak; and in the evening, when the dusky yews are all in shadow, we must sit in the churchyard beside the Conway, where the great artist loved to paint. The church—the "Chapel in the Wood"—is uncouth and bare, and not improved by modern windows; but it has stood here for many centuries, and among its ugly pews we realise with a thrill that the tomb at our feet holds the dust of a prince of Llewelyn's house.

This is the country of Llewelyn the Great. On one side of us is the valley that tradition names as his birthplace; on the other the valley where he was buried. His grave we cannot see, for his burial-place at Aberconwy was desecrated when Edward I. built his great castle; but on the way from Bettws to Rhuddlan we may pause at the church of Llanrwst and see there, on the floor of Inigo Jones's chapel of the Wynnes, the coffin of stone that once held the bones of

THE OLD CHAPEL, BETTWS-Y-COED.

THE LLUGWY AT BETTWS-Y-COED.

the greatest of the Welsh princes. There are a good many interesting things here—things much older than the church itself; but not the least pleasing, I think, is the Latin epitaph that the former rector composed, with a pretty wit, for his own tomb. It has been thus translated:—

"Once the undeserving schoolmaster,
Then the more undeserving lecturer,
Last of all the most undeserving rector of this parish.
Do not think, speak, or write anything evil of the dead."

If we are going to Rhuddlan it will not be necessary for us to cross the shaking bridge, designed—perhaps—by Inigo Jones. I see no object in a bridge shaking, myself, but there are always those at hand who for a consideration will shake you the bridge if it gives you pleasure. Our way, however, lies to the right, up a winding hill three miles in length, with an average gradient of 1 in 12. It is a serious climb; but the backward view of the mountain range beyond the Conway is magnificent—a view of rather a rare quality, and not often

seen by those who depend upon horses' legs or their own. The road that crosses the top of the hills runs through scenery of rather a commonplace type; then, as we drop down into Abergele the Morfa Rhuddlan lies before us like a map—a dull map—with fashionable Rhyl in the distance; and from Abergele to Rhuddlan the road is surely the straightest and flattest that ever was seen.

The ivy-smothered towers of Rhuddlan Castle stand on the banks of the Clwyd. That great statesman and soldier, Edward I., being weary of the "Welsh Question," determined to get the affair finished once for all; so he rebuilt this castle, settled down here with his Court and family, conquered the country, made its laws, and saw that they were carried out. There is a remnant still standing of the house where he held his parliament and "secured its independence to the Principality of Wales." These words, though not Edward's, are quite in the spirit of his little jokes. It was here that he played his historical practical joke upon the Welsh nation, when he promised them a prince who was a native of Wales

and could not speak a word of English—and then showed them the baby. There is nothing for us to see inside this castle, for Cromwell altogether dismantled it, and its heavy green towers, though impressive enough as being the grave of Welsh independence, are not nearly so typical of the "ruthless king" as his great fortresses of Carnarvon and Harlech and Conway.

Conway is only seventeen miles away, and we may see it on our return journey to Bettws, by driving back to Abergele, where there is a nice old posting-house, and thence passing on above Colwyn Bay. Five hundred years ago another traveller came by this way from Conway: a poor, duped, heart-sick king riding helplessly to imprisonment and mysterious death. It was at Conway that Bolingbroke's messenger Northumberland, a man of a most treacherous heart, met Richard II. with solemn vows of friendship; and along this coast that they rode together, still smiling, the knave and the fool, to Rhuddlan and Flint, where Bolingbroke's army lay waiting on the sands o' Dee. Those splendid walls and towers of Conway

that we see beyond the estuary, piled high above the water-side, were Richard II.'s last refuge. From that day forward every roof that sheltered him was a prison.

All through the history of Wales this estuary has played an important part. Long, long before Edward's magnificent towers rose over the desecrated burial-place of the great Llewelyn there was a castle guarding the river-mouth at Deganwy. We can see its fragments still if we choose to drive round that way before crossing to Conway; but there is only a remnant left, a few stones on a hillside facing the sea—stones that tell of Maelgwyn of the sixth century, and of Norman Robert, lord of Rhuddlan, who rebuilt Maelgwyn's fortress and met his death there, and of King John of England, who was starved out by the Welsh. Robert of Rhuddlan's death was picturesque, and, I imagine, well deserved. This was the manner of it. He was still employed in rebuilding the Welsh castle of Deganwy for the harrying of the people to whom it really belonged, when one day he fell asleep—a rash thing to do in those days

and in that place. Then came Griffith, Prince of Gwynedd, with his ships, and stole all Robert's cattle, and was just setting sail again when Robert awoke and saw what was going forward. Down this steep bank below the castle he dashed to the shore, and fought desperately, with only one follower to support him; but soon died, of course, by the spears of the Welsh. Griffith nailed his head to the mast and sailed away; then, when the Normans chased him, flung it into the sea before their eyes.

As for King John, when he in his turn tried to strengthen the fortress of Deganwy, he was glad enough to escape with his wicked head on his shoulders. He had come into Wales "minded to destroy all that had life within the country"; but he departed, we are told, in a great fury, leaving a large proportion of his army behind him for Llewelyn to bury. For the Welsh had cut off all the supplies of the English, "so that in time they were glad to take up with horse-flesh or anything, were it never so mean, which might fill up their greedy and empty stomachs." So says Caradoc of Llancarvan.

Other historians give us a letter written on the spot by a certain knight, a man of parts, of whose life and letters one would like to know more. He describes the royal army as "watching, fasting, praying, and freezing. We watch," he continues, "for fear of the Welsh. . . . We fast for want of provisions. . . . We pray that we may speedily return safe and scot-free home; and we freeze for want of winter garments, having but a thin linen shirt to keep us from the wind." This vivid letter-writer goes on to tell us of the spoiling of Aberconwy Abbey and the burning of all the valuable old Welsh records there, and he shows a good deal of nice feeling in the matter.

It was on the ruins of Aberconwy that Edward's glorious castle rose later on to overawe the Welsh. This Castle of Conway is the most beautiful of all Henry de Elfreton's works, I think; more beautiful in itself even than Harlech; and we can well believe, as we drive across the bridge and under the great machicolated town gate, that in early days it could only be taken by the help of guile or famine. Glyndwr's men won their

way in by disguising one of their number as a carpenter, and to dislodge them Hotspur, finding his engines useless, was obliged to starve them out. During the Civil War the castle was held for the King by the Archbishop of York, an extremely "muscular Christian," who on being superseded in his command felt the slight so deeply that he joined Mytton the Roundhead, and himself led the assault! And these great walls, fifteen feet in thickness, yielded at last. As one climbs the long flight of steps to the entrance with all these things in one's mind there is something almost overwhelming in the grandeur of these strong towers.

"A very neat castle," says Camden.

When we have had our luncheon at the Castle Hotel we must cross the road to Plas Mawr, the town house of the Wynnes of Gwydir, who entertained Queen Elizabeth there more than once, and even decorated her rooms with appropriate symbols, royal arms, and monograms. The plaster mouldings in this house are its special feature: fireplaces, ceilings, walls, all are ornamented with them, and in each room the design is

different. One cannot, however, enjoy the mouldings and the oak furniture and the priests' hiding-hole and the lantern window with an undivided mind, for the Plas Mawr ghost—unconventional soul!—walks by daylight.

We leave Conway by the road that follows the western bank of the river, for by so doing we secure an impressive backward view of the old town walls, which is ample compensation for the steep ascent that soon carries us out of sight. Moreover this road, after a few more hills and a few more miles of level going, with a view up the valley that grows lovelier every moment, will lead us to Trefriew, a dear little watering-place with a good hotel. The tiny church here has no outward attractions; it has not even any appearance of age. Yet it has its own romance; for it is said that when the English wife of Llewelyn the Great—Joan, the daughter of King John—found the severe climb to the old church of Llanrhychwyn too much for her, her thoughtful husband built this one for her at the foot

CONWAY CASTLE.

THE PASS OF NANT FFRANCON.

of the hill. Those who do not share her feelings may still see, on the heights above the village, the yet older church where Llewelyn worshipped before his wife objected to the walk. And beyond it again, on the wild hill-top, is Llyn Geirionydd, on whose shores lived Taliesin, the Bard of the Radiant Brow, the most famous of all the Welsh bards.

Between Trefriew and Bettws there are but a few miles of level road and very lovely scenery. Gwydir Castle, the old house of the Wynnes, stands between us and the river, and may be seen when Lord Carrington is away. It is full, I believe, of carvings and tapestry and relics of history. Queen Elizabeth stayed here, and Leicester, and Charles I.

But here among these wild Welsh hills Elizabeth's starched ruff and Charles's curls strike one as a little out of place. We may find memories of Elizabeth—who seems to have slept in as many different places as a motorist—in half the towns and big houses of England. This is the country of the Kings of Gwynedd.

We saw the Lledr Valley stretched out before us as we came down the hill from Pentre Voelas to Bettws. But that bird's-eye view of it gives one no idea at all of its extreme beauty; of the towering height of its steep slopes, now bare and rocky, now richly wooded: of its brilliant colouring and deep purple shadows. At the head of it, where its beauty is partly spoiled by quarries and all their works, is Dolwyddelan village; and beyond that again, standing alone among the desolate hills, is the stern tower where Llewelyn the Great, the "eagle of men," is believed to have been born. It is only a square tower now, and though it once had two towers it was never a place of any size; for Dolwyddelan and Dolbadarn, the two mountain strongholds of the princes of Gwynedd, did not rely upon their own strength, but on the great bewildering hills that defended them on every side. Thus it was that this small fortress was the last to yield to Edward I. And while remembering Llewelyn here do not let us forget to dedicate one sigh to his poor

father, Iorwerth Drwyndwn—of the broken nose—who, when that unfortunate feature kept him from his princedom, was given this country and its tower by way of compensation.

It is the custom to return to Bettws from this point, for reasons that a glance at the Contour Book may perhaps explain. But the fashion has been set, I think, by bicyclists, whom one really cannot blame for shirking the hill that rises between Dolwyddelan and Maentwrog. Here let me assure motorists that there is little reason why they should miss the wild beauty of the moors above this point; the rolling expanse of brown and purple bogland, the endless succession of hills, the grand outline of Moel Siabod. For though the road is certainly steep the surface is excellent, except for a mile or so above Blaenau Festiniog, that strange town on the mountain ledge that entirely owes its existence to the neighbouring quarries, and yet is more than a mile long and has three railway stations. There is no need to brave the hill again to return to Bettws, for the road

by Maentwrog, Penrhyndeudraeth, and the Pass of Aberglaslyn is one of the loveliest in Wales, and though we shall come down the Pass by and by there is no hardship in going over the ground twice. It is worth remembering, too, that at Maentwrog it is possible, if time allows, to cross the valley and approach the famous toy railway-line at its prettiest point, Tan-y-Bwlch, where a lake lies hidden among the woods, and where we may have tea on the grass close beside the water, facing a scene of rich colouring and deep, cool shadows.

All this, however, is a digression. It is highly probable that the great majority of motorists will look at the Contour Book and return to Bettws from Dolwyddelan. They will have the advantage of seeing the Lledr Valley from a new point of view.

Now in the Snowdon country there are three great passes through the mountains to the sea: the Passes of Nant Ffrancon, Llanberis, and Nant Gwynant combined with Aberglaslyn. It is hard to say which is the most beautiful of the three; and it is quite imperative, and also quite easy, to

see them all by pursuing rather a zigzag course. Nant Ffrancon is the route of the Holyhead Road and the nearest to Bettws: so we will go down by Nant Ffrancon, and come up again by Llanberis on the same day; and on the next start off again by way of Nant Gwynant and Aberglaslyn, passing through Bedd Gelert.

The road climbs out of Bettws through a thick wood beside the rushing Llugwy, and soon draws near the Swallow Falls.* This triple fall is only a stone's-throw from the road, and it is worth while to follow the slippery path across the pine-needles, and stand for a moment in the pricking spray watching the commotion. In the thick of the hubbub they say the spirit of Sir John Wynne, which left this mortal coil early in the seventeenth century, is being "purged, punished, and spouted upon"; though I have never heard anything definite against him except that he was

* I have seen somewhere that the original name of these falls was not Rhaiadr y Wennol, or Swallow Falls, but Rhaiadr Eweynol, or Foaming Falls. This seems probable: but Borrow accepted the former version, and he was a stern critic in such matters.

"shrewd and successful." He was a member of that Court of the Marches of which we heard so much at Ludlow, and he left a very valuable record of his family behind him.

This bit of country between Bettws and Capel Curig is one of the gems of North Wales. Moel Siabod towers above us; and beyond it soon appears that cloud-capped peak whose name quickens every Welsh heart—the rallying-point of heroes, the symbol and stronghold of the liberties of Wales. The finest view of Snowdon is from Capel Curig, where the double peak is reflected in the double lake.

Our road, still climbing, turns to the right in Capel Curig and takes us up into the heart of the hills, through a scene of splendid desolation — bare heights, huge boulders tossed and heaped upon the ground, jagged outlines, and dark sullen colours—a land that was vastly disconcerting to those travellers of an earlier day whose idea of beauty was "a smiling landscape." As we reach the summit and see the waters of Llyn Ogwen below us,

sapphire-blue or lead-grey according to circumstances, the great sides of Tryfaen and the Glydyrs tower on the left. Beyond the lake Alla Wen rises steeply. "A horrid spot of hills," says a seventeenth-century writer. "The most dreadful horse-path in Wales," says Pennant; and that indeed it may well have been before Telford came here to perform his miracles of engineering. "The district through which the surveys were carried is mountainous," he says quietly; "and I found the existing roads very imperfect." When we have passed Llyn Ogwen, and the cottage where food is to be had if necessary, and the sudden turning over the bridge, and are swinging down the gentle slope of Nant Ffrancon high up on the mountain-side, we must surely give nearly as much admiration to this road which descends for ten miles with no steeper gradient than 1 in 15 as we give to the wide Valley of the Beavers below us. Above us the mountain is a mass of grey boulders, of scars and landslips; below us it sweeps down precipitously to where the little

Ogwen dances like a streak of quicksilver. Presently we pass under the hideous excrescence of the Penrhyn slate quarries, grey terraces of rubbish contrasting cruelly with the glowing gorse of the opposite slopes; and then through the equally hideous town of slate, Bethesda, the miners' town, whose slate walls, slate steps, and slate porches are enough, as Dr. Johnson, would say, "to make a man hang himself." Let us hurry on into the Cochwillan Woods.

Very soon after passing the modern towers of Penrhyn Castle we reach the town of Bangor, "which for the beauty of its situation, was called Ban-cor, the high or conspicuous choir." It is not a very inviting place, nevertheless, and there is no need to pause here, for even the cathedral is not beautiful. It has had a great deal to bear; for it was burnt by Harold the Saxon, and again by King John, and again by Owen Glyndwr; and no doubt the castle built by Hugh, Earl of Chester, suffered on one or all of these occasions, for Camden says, "though he made diligent inquiry he

could not discover the least footsteps" of it. The original cathedral was founded by St. Deiniol in the sixth century, and beneath it is buried the great Welsh prince Owen Gwynedd, hero of many battles, who fought here on the heights above the straits a fight so desperate that "the Menai could not ebb on account of the torrent of blood which flowed into it." Before we go on to Carnarvon we must cross those straits, for the sake of the bridge, and of the view, and of Beaumaris.

It was in the year 1826 that the mail-coach, swaying under its burden of excited officials, rolled slowly for the first time over the Menai Bridge. It was a brave scene. Telford, in his modest way, had pleaded against a formal procession, but he could not check personal enthusiasm nor prevent the mustering of that long, long line of carriages and horsemen and thousands on foot, which followed the Royal London and Holyhead Mail, amid the fluttering of flags and the firing of guns, and the roaring of a gale. Nor yet could he control the shouts that rose above the wind when he

himself passed by in an inconspicuous carriage.

As soon as we reach the sacred shore of Mona, the last home of the Druids, we turn sharply to the right; unless, indeed, we have a mind to pursue the Holyhead road for a couple of miles, for the pleasure of telling our friends that we have seen Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerchwryndrobwllantysiliogogogoch. I once heard a rumour that this place was to be connected by rail with Pontrhydfendigaedmynachlogfawr, but as the scheme may come to nothing perhaps it would be wiser not to mention it.

From the shore road to Beaumaris we see the whole grand panorama of the Gwynedd mountains, height beyond height and range beyond range, from the pale distant peak of Snowdon to the dark shadows of steep Penmaenmawr. It is a scene that has a quality of strangeness in it. One looks at it from the outside, as it were; for Anglesey, which once was green with the sacred groves of the Druids, is now, as it was in the days of Giraldus Cambrensis, "an arid and stony land, rough and unpleasant in its appear-

ance." One feels, on this flat shore, worlds away from that beautiful country beyond the strait. On a day of sunshine and cloud, when the mountains are glowing with every imaginable colour and seem every moment to be changing their shapes under the moving shadows, it is worth driving many a mile to sit on the beach of Beaumaris.

Behind us, close at hand, is Beaumaris Castle; opposite to us, across the water, is "Aber of the white shells," where Llewelyn the Great held his Court, and where his English wife died; and a little further along the Anglesey shore to our left is Llanfaes, where he buried her "with dire lamentation and no little honour," and built over her grave a monastery that was altogether destroyed by Henry IV. Poor Joan's coffin must have been through many changes before the sad day when it occurred to some thrifty farmer that the queer old stone trough would do finely for his cattle to drink out of. It was fortunately discovered early in the last century, and another watering-trough having been found for the cows, it was placed in safety in the garden at Baron Hill.

Beaumaris Castle does not make so brave a show as most of Edward's fortresses; but its ten low towers and its double line of defence were no doubt formidable enough before their thick drapery of ivy gave them so soft an air. The rusty iron rings that hang on the outer wall give one of those little touches of the commonplace that bring the past so near. Edward I. cut a canal and filled the moat of Beaumaris Castle from the sea, and so the ships that brought supplies to the garrison were moored and unladed at the very walls.

The shores of the Menai have seen a vast amount of fighting of a very desperate kind, from the days when the Druids stood at bay here to the time when Edward I. bridged the strait with boats and was badly beaten by the last Llewelyn. And as we re-cross the bridge and look down at the ancient little church of Llandysilio so far below us, we may remember another scene—peaceful in itself but not unconnected with bloodshed—when on a hill near here, Archbishop Baldwin and that delightful chronicler Giraldus induced many persons, by persuasive discourses, to "take the cross."

THE MENAI BRIDGE, FROM ANGLESEY.

CARNARVON CASTLE.

From the other side of the Menai, on the Carnarvon road, the view is, of course, comparatively tame; but we have only eight miles to travel before reaching Carnarvon, and on a level road they are soon disposed of.

It is difficult to realise at the first moment that the well-preserved, clean walls upon which one comes so suddenly in the middle of Carnarvon were raised by Edward I.; though that king himself stands above the gateway, with his hand on the sword that worked so hard. This is the greatest of his castles; he chose it for the birthplace of his son, and chose it too, apparently, to be the monument and symbol of himself. Nothing could be a more fitting emblem of the unyielding strength of the king who built castles in Wales almost as profusely as other men build them in Spain. On this, the town side of it, one is more struck with its strength than with its beauty. To see it at its best one must cross the bridge, and from the other side of the river-mouth look at the huge bulk of it; the long line of the curtain-wall

reflected in the water; the great octagonal towers, with their clusters of slender turrets; the unutterable repellent air of it. There are no windows in these cold walls; no ivy or very little, to soften their austerity. Even from this side, though the water and the shipping give it picturesque surroundings, I think Carnarvon Castle is not beautiful so much as impressive. When Queen Eleanor entered it through the gate still called the Queen's she did not see it as it stands now, for it was finished by her son, who was born in the castle soon after her arrival. A little room in the Eagle Tower is shown as his birthplace; but those who have read the local records declare it to be proved beyond doubt that the tower was without a roof till the baby in question, Edward II., put a roof on it himself.

It is surprisingly well preserved. This, no doubt, is partly because it has never been overcome by any more destructive agent than the starvation of its garrison. Glyndwr besieged it on its landward side, and his French allies attacked it from the sea; but they made little impression upon it, and

finally, since time was precious, they thought it wiser to employ their engines elsewhere more profitably, though the garrison within numbered only twenty-eight men, in sore want of provisions.

Between Carnarvon and the Pass of Llanberis lie ten miles of undulating country. But the mountains are towering before us like an impassable wall, growing ever higher and more formidable as we pass Llyn Padarn and Llanberis town, whence the mountain-railway starts for the summit of Snowdon. No doubt the northern shores of Llyn Padarn and of Llyn Peris, which lies beyond it, were once beautiful; but they are now merely a mass of unsightly débris, mountains of broken slate, terrace above terrace of melancholy grey. The southern shore of Llyn Peris, however, at the very foot of the Pass, has kept its own wild beauty, and on a craggy little hill that rises at the lower end "there is yet a pece of a toure," as Leland says. A very notable piece of a tower it is too; for Dolbadarn was the very centre and heart and ultimate citadel of Welsh free-

dom from the earliest days. Here Llewelyn, the third and last, kept his brother a prisoner for twenty-three years, and here Owen Glyndwr hid himself whenever it suited him to elude the English, who invariably lost their way among these mountains. It was here, too, that Owen hid his chief enemy, Lord Grey of Ruthin, who had embroiled him with the King of England and caused all the trouble. But this little square grey "pece of a toure" is far older, they say, than Owen or Llewelyn. It is supposed to have been built by Maelgwyn, the same prince who built that first castle at Deganwy which was rebuilt by Robert of Rhuddlan and King John at such large cost to themselves. Maelgwyn, King of Gwynedd in the sixth century, is one of the forceful characters who stand out here and there conspicuously in the rather bewildering host of Cymric princes; a personable man, according to all accounts, and one of great courage and success in battle, yet not without leanings towards the monastic life. He actually became a monk for a time; but no one can

DOLBADARN CASTLE.

UNIV. OF MICH.

SNOWDON, FROM CAPEL CURIG.

have been greatly surprised when he tired of the constraint and took to soldiering again. On the whole I fear he was a truculent creature, for Taliesin, "chief of the bards of the West," proclaimed, with the ambiguity common to prophets, that—

"A most strange creature should come from the sea-marsh of Rhianedd
As a punishment of iniquity on Maelgwn Gywnedd,
His hair, his teeth, and his eyes being as gold."

And Maelgwyn died of the yellow plague.

It is only a little way beyond this point that the actual Pass of Llanberis begins to rise, cleaving its straight course between the mountains to the very foot of Snowdon—"to the Welsh always the hill of hills," as Borrow says. The highest peak, Y Wyddfa, is not visible from the Pass, but one sharp-edged shoulder in certain lights seems to be within a stone's-throw of the road. This is the steepest of the three passes near Snowdon, and the one whose name is best known to the world in general. As for beauty—the most beautiful of the three is the one on whose royal

blues and imperial purples one's eyes are actually feasting at the moment. But I would say this: to understand even the elements of the beauty of these hills it is imperative to travel *up* each of the three passes, for as one climbs up into the heart of the mountains the effect is in every case more beautiful than on the downward journey. On a continuous tour this is of course impossible; and that is one reason why the best way of seeing Snowdonia is to stay for a few days at a centre, such as Bettws, or Capel Curig, or Pen-y-Gwryd.

At one or other of the two latter places it will probably be necessary to spend a night after this run from Bettws to Bangor and Carnarvon. Capel Curig has the finer view, and a hotel that has overlooked Llyn Mymbyr and faced the peaks of Snowdon for many a year. I do not know if it is the same that Sir Walter Scott stayed in and Lockhart described as "a pretty little inn in a most picturesque situation certainly, and as to the matter of toasted cheese, quite exquisite"; but it is without doubt the same that seemed to George

Borrow "a very magnificent edifice." He dined here, he tells us, "in a grand saloon amidst a great deal of fashionable company," who "surveyed him with looks of the most supercilious disdain." I strongly suspect that both the fashion and the disdain existed only in a sensitive imagination.

Pen-y-Gwryd is exactly at the junction of the Pass of Llanberis with Nant Gwynant, the valley down which our future course lies; and here too there is a comfortable inn, with memories of Charles Kingsley and the author of "Tom Brown's Schooldays." From this point we can start off in the morning without retracing a step.

As one glides down the perfect gradient of this entrancing valley of the Glaslyn, with the very blue waters of Llyn Gwynant glittering below and the sides of Snowdon rising precipitously from the shore on the right, and on the left the wild green slopes climbing up and up from the roadside to the sky, one comes after all to a decision as to the comparative beauty of these passes. Nant Gwynant is the best. The hill is three miles and a half long, and in

some places just steep enough to force us to slacken speed and so make the most of our surroundings; then a few miles of undulating road lead past Llyn Dinas and, still by the side of the stony Glaslyn, into the village of Bedd Gelert, which has won fame on false grounds as the burial-place of Llewelyn's hound. The rough, pathetic tomb, that stands in a meadow and is reached by a path made by the feet of thousands of pilgrims, has a most plausible appearance; but it was, I believe, raised by the forethought of a hotel-keeper—a man who apparently knew his world. No bones of a faithful dog lie here; but if we may not weep over the dust of Gelert we may at all events mourn the loss of a beautiful, but dead, legend. We drive through the village and enter, almost at once, the Pass of Aberglaslyn. The steep part of the road is quite short; but this strange cleft in the rock, this narrow ravine that holds only the river and the road between its cliffs, forms an imposing southern gate to the Snowdon mountains. We pass out of it almost

suddenly into the wide, level meadowland of the Traeth Mawr—and may the gorse be in its full glory at the time!

This plain that we are swinging across so happily, this plain of green and gold, was a barren marsh, useless to man or beast, till it was reclaimed in the early part of last century by a certain Mr. Maddox, who gave his name to the two towns that own their existence to him—Portmadoc and Tremadoc. At Tremadoc lived Percy and Harriet Shelley for a little time, while they were still happy. The poet, with characteristic enthusiasm, was fascinated by the great draining-scheme; and in his leisure moments grounded poor Harriet in Latin.

It is here or at Portmadoc that we turn to the right, if we are minded, to explore the little-known peninsula of Lleyn. For some mysterious reason the greater part of this promontory is seldom visited, though it is not by any means without attractions. It cannot, of course, compare in any respect with the dramatic grandeur of the Snowdon country; there are large tracts that

might even be called uninteresting; but from the southern uplands the panorama of the mountains of Gwynedd is really magnificent, and on the northern coast the fine outline of Yr Eifl—ridiculously corrupted into the Rivals—rises very grandly from the sea. And when the gorse is in blossom the whole country is veined with gold, for here they make their hedges of gorse, and the air is heavy with its poignant sweetness.

As for the roads, they are mostly good. The roads from Pwllheli to Nevin, to Yr Eifl and Clynnogfawr, and to Aberdaron are all excellent; so also is the one that connects Nevin with Aberdaron; but the "Saints' Road to Bardsey" from Nevin to Llanaellraiarn should be avoided, since the saints, apparently, employed indifferent engineers.

To reach Pwllheli from Portmadoc we must past through Criccieth, one of the most popular places on this coast, and one that must have been really beautiful before its popularity spoilt it. It has a nice hotel, and is, in any case, a far more attractive

stopping-place than the ambitious Pwllheli. The castle, not without dignity, stands aloof upon its abrupt round promontory, facing the rows of modern lodging-house as though they were some new kind of enemy drawn up against it. For that Edwardian gateway has faced many enemies, and the castle still more. Of its original founding I believe nothing is certainly known, but it is older than its gateway, for Llewelyn the Great chose it for the prison of his unruly son, Gryffydd, of whom it was said that "peace was not to be looked for in his neighbourhood." But, indeed, in those times a strong prison seems to have been the only way of securing peace in any one's neighbourhood.

Much the most picturesque person who has ever been connected with Criccieth was Sir Howel y Fwyall, or *of the Axe*. So doughty were his deeds at Poictiers that the Black Prince not only did him honour in the usual ways, with money and knighthood, but gave orders that the pole-axe with which he had done so valiantly should be set up in this castle of Criccieth

—of which Howel was Constable—and should be served with a mess of meat daily. Eight yeoman were entrusted with this service, and after the ceremony the meat was given to the poor. The custom was kept up till the reign of Elizabeth.

The name of Pwllheli is well known, if ill-pronounced, in the world of tourists. It aspires to be a fashionable watering-place, and one feels that success may possibly crown its endeavours, when one considers the natural disadvantages of Rhyl and Borth and many another prosperous spot.

A few years ago we should have been obliged, having once passed Criccieth, to spend the night at Pwllheli; but now we shall do well if we rather choose Nevin for our stopping-place. A nice new hotel has been built there—a hotel with no foolish pretensions, but evidently with every intention of gradually becoming a thoroughly comfortable abiding-place for golfers who like quietness. The little town lies close under the shelter of the hills, and between it and the sea is the flat land of the Morfa Nevin, where Edward I. gathered all the

chivalry of England and many a foreign noble to celebrate his conquest of Wales in a great tournament.

Nevin is threatened with the railway, which, if it actually approaches the place, will certainly spoil it; but it will be long, I imagine, before any intrusion of that kind disturbs the peace or injures the beauty of little Aberdaron. It is an elect spot, this End of the World in Wales; more remote, less visited than St. David's, and infinitely less famous; yet once trodden, like St. David's, by the weary feet of countless pilgrims. For just beyond that low headland on our right is sacred Bardsey, the Island of the Saints, where lies the dust of twenty thousand holy men. St. Mary's Abbey, of which some fragments still are left, was founded in such early days that Dubritius, who crowned King Arthur and then resigned the See of Caerleon to St. David, came to end his day in this remote monastery; and so holy was the soil at last that every monk in Wales crossed this dangerous channel to kneel upon it. It was here, from these

wide, white sands of Aberdaron, that they embarked, half trembling, half inspired—white-robed Cistercians and sombre Benedictines—and here, in this little church between the hills and the sea, that they spent the night on their knees before braving dangers that were not by any means imaginary. The building has been re-roofed and much restored, but these are the very walls within which the pilgrims prayed, the very walls that once gave sanctuary to any man, innocent or guilty, who sought their shelter. The blind wall on the north bears witness to the early British origin of the church.

And we must not forget, as we stand thinking of the pilgrim monks on the shore, that this sheltered, isolated corner, hidden closely by the hills on the one side and protected by the long headlands on the other, was once visited by secular history. Into this bay sailed Hotspur's father, the base Northumberland, from France, and from Harlech came Owen Glyndwr and Edmund Mortimer; and here in the house of the lord of Aberdaron they swore to be

thenceforward "bound by the bond of a true league and true friendship and sure and good union," and to act in all ways as became "good true and faithful friends to good true and faithful friends."

The fascinations of the Bay of Aberdaron, however, must not blind us to the fact that the finest scenery in the Peninsula, of Lleyn, is in the north. From Pwllheli we should drive across to Llanaellraiarn under the great brow of Yr Eifl, and then, turning to the right, follow the road between the wild, craggy hills and the sea to Clynnogfawr. Here lived and died the great St. Beuno, and the church that bears his name is of a size and importance quite unusual in so tiny a place: "almost as bigge as St. Davides," says Leland. This large church only dates from the fifteenth century, but the little chapel where St. Beuno is buried is connected with it by a covered way, and was founded by the saint himself in the seventh century. His tomb was still to be seen in Pennant's day, and had the gift of working miracles, but now both monument and miracles are no more. In the larger

church is carefully preserved a strange old chest that is said to have belonged to St. Beuno.

To reach the Traeth Mawr from Clynnog our best way is to go on to Pont-y-Croes, then strike across to Pen-y-Groes, and thence descend to Tremadoc. There is not much to be said in favour of this road's surface, but the beauty of it increases every moment, and for the last few miles, as we drop gently down on to that plain of gorse that lies like a sheet of flame between two ranges of purple mountains, we have as fine a sight above, below, and before us as any we shall find in Wales. A few minutes later we are in Portmadoc, and from the long embankment there look up the valley of the Glaslyn across the Traeth Mawr to that gate of Gwynedd through which we came a little while ago.

Presently we cross the estuary of the river Dwryd by a toll-bridge. I think this river-bank must be the scene of a touching incident described by Giraldus. He and his Archbishop, recruiting for the Crusades, were met "at the passage of a bridge" between

the Traeth Mawr and Llanbedr near Harlech by Meredyth ap Conan, a prince of this country. He brought with him a large suite, and then and there by the river-side the Archbishop preached to them, and "many persons were signed with the Cross." Among these ardent souls was a personal friend of the young prince. Meredyth, seated higher on the bank than his suite, looked on while the symbolic cross was sewn upon the cloaks of the new crusaders, till it came to the turn of his own friend. Then Meredyth, says Giraldus, "observing that the cloak on which the cross was to be sewn was of too thin and too common a texture, with a flood of tears threw him down his own."

From the banks of the Dwryd a very level road soon brings us within sight of Harlech. It is a very distant glimpse of it that we have first; an irregular outline, a grey mass of towers standing out against the sky, raised grandly upon a rock above a plain that is nearly as flat as the sea beyond it. Then trees hide it, and we climb through the woods to the level of the great gate

before which so many armies have stood before us—armies of Owen and of Henry, of Edward IV., and of Oliver.

Long, long before Henry de Elfreton, king of architects, built this grand fortress at Edward's command, a royal castle stood upon this rock. So, at least, says one of the "Mabinogion," and here, under the spell of the land that created those old romances, I would fain believe that Branwen, the daughter of Llyr, lived at Harlech with her royal brother Bendigeid Vran, and that Matholwch, King of Ireland, came across the sea to woo her, with thirteen ships flying beautiful flags of satin. At the wedding, unfortunately, there was trouble between the two kings; but after a certain amount of friction the banquet was "carried on with joyousness," and the happy pair journeyed towards Ireland with their thirteen ships. In Ireland Branwen "passed her time pleasantly, enjoying honour and friendship," which she owed to the fact—we are given to understand—that she presented each of her visitors with a clasp, or a ring, or a royal jewel, "such as it was honourable to be seen

NEAR BEDD GELERT.

GATEWAY OF HARLECH CASTLE.

departing with."* By and by mischief was made between Matholwch and his wife, and she was sent to the kitchen to cook for the Court, which seems a drastic way of treating a Queen Consort. Then came Bendigeid Vran, her brother, to avenge her, with the hosts of seven score countries and four, and there was war between the two islands because of her. And only seven men of the Welsh escaped, and in Ireland none were left alive except five women. And Branwen went with the seven men of Wales to Mona, and she "looked towards Ireland and towards the Island of the Mighty, to see if she could descry them. 'Alas!' said she, 'woe is me that I was ever born; two islands have been destroyed because of me!' Then she uttered a loud groan and there broke her heart. And they made her a four-sided grave, and buried her upon the banks of the Alaw." And her name still lives upon this rock of Harlech in Branwen's Tower.

Bendigeid Vran, the son of Llyr, was not the last Welsh prince who held his Court

* Quotations from the "Mabinogion" are from Lady Charlotte Guest's translation.

here within sight of Snowdon. For Glyndwr made his way in between those great towers after a long siege, during which Henry's garrison, who were at last reduced to sixteen, locked up their governor because they did not trust his constancy. Glyndwr brought his family here, and held a parliament, and gathered a little Court round him; but after another long siege he lost more than the castle, for his son-in-law Mortimer was killed, and his wife and grandchildren were taken prisoners to London. But it was that later siege by Edward IV.'s army that was the most fierce of all. It was then that the March of the Men of Harlech first stirred the sea-breeze and the hearts of men; and it was then that the blood of six thousand men flowed here where we are standing before the gates. Still later on Harlech held very obstinately for Charles I.

At Harlech we look our last on Snowdon, for the road, high above the sea, soon turns a corner, then dips to the shore at Llanbedr. At this pretty village those who are prepared to face a road that finally becomes little more than a track, and are, moreover, tolerably

good walkers, may leave the high-road and drive up into a very wild and beautiful bit of country to Cwm Bychan. I freely admit that the enterprise is more suitable for bicycles than for motors, and I further confess that I have never undertaken it in a car myself; but I should be extremely happy to make the attempt on the first fine day. For Llyn Cwm Bychan is a lovely lake lying among moors and steep, rocky hills; it has the wildness of a loch in Galloway. And the only way out of this hollow in the hills, except the track by which we enter it, is a mighty staircase of stone slabs set regularly in the hillside—a staircase a mile in length, which has withstood time and weather since the feet of the Romans passed this way.

Even the best-advertised car could hardly climb the Roman Steps; so we must rejoin the coast road at Llanbedr and go on our way to Barmouth. There was once a time very long ago, it is said, when all the bay that lies upon our right was a fertile plain, the Plain of Gwaelod, with cities and fortresses thick upon the ground, and a

great and busy population, and a king called Gwyddno Longshanks. And because the land lay so low and the sea so close at hand a mighty embankment of stone was built along the shore, and all went well for many a year. But there came a time when the chief overseer of this great dyke was Seithenyn ap Seithyn Saidi, and he, unfortunately, has been known ever since as one of the "three immortal drunkards of the Isle of Britain." It is easy to imagine the result: the decay of the dyke, and the terrible night when the waters swept all before them and drowned the whole Cantref of Gwaelod. The point of Mochras near Llanbedr was at one extremity of the drowned cantref; and still, when the tide is low, you may sometimes see the long line of the broken dyke. As late as the year 1824 there was a stone in existence which had been found below the sea a hundred yards beyond the shore, and bore an inscription meaning, "Here lies the boatman to King Gwynddo."* I do not know if the stone still exists, but as it was used as a

* *Sic.*

footbridge it probably does not. At the beginning of the nineteenth century this seems, in Wales, to have been considered the best way of using up old monuments. It was certainly the quickest.

Eight miles from Llanbedr is Barmouth. The town itself is becoming every year more entirely a prey to the family group. Every year there are more hotels, more bathing-boxes, more wooden spades. But I doubt if anywhere in England or Wales a town is built in a more beautiful spot. You cannot drive across the long bridge that spans the estuary at its mouth, but you will be a thousandfold repaid if you leave your car and cross the bridge on foot, for the best view—I think I am not too rash in saying the best view in Wales—is from about the middle of the bridge. The Mawddach winds away between two ranges of mountains, on whose grand slopes the brilliant greens and purples, the rich browns and far-away faint blues change every moment under the varying sky. Cader Idris rises on the right in gloomy dignity from the soft drapery of foliage that is flung about

his feet. And in the foreground, when the tide is low—and that, I maintain, is the loveliest time—the blue sea is riven with the rosy gold of wet sands, dotted with countless sea-gulls.

A great deal of this we can see as we drive up the estuary on its northern bank to Dolgelley, by an excellent road that clings close under the hills. Every moment the scene changes, and all the changes are good; whether we look across at Cader's grand shoulder against the sky, or up the valley at the winding water and the distant hills, or overhead on our left at the mountain-sides that rise so steeply from the very road, or even when, the trees hemming us in for a moment, we see only glimpses through them of purple rock or shining river. At Llanelltyd the Mawddach meets the Wnion, and our way lies to the right over the bridge. As we cross the bridge the ruins of Cymmer Abbey lie upon our left on the river-bank—a Cistercian abbey, as we may easily guess, since we know the pretty taste in scenery possessed by that sagacious Order. If the truth were known,

I fear we might find that their motive in choosing, as they always did, the loneliest and loveliest spots in the country, was one of self-denial, for the mountainous solitude that we love was in their day regarded with little less than terror. This particular abbey was founded in the last years of the twelfth century, and it was patronised by Llewelyn the Great. Behind it, about two miles away, are the slopes of Nannau, where Owen Glyndwr once went for a walk with his cousin and came back without him.

Owen, as I have already said, was a man of swift and extremely complete vengeance, and treachery made his gorge rise. His cousin, Howel Sele, the lord of Nannau, lived on that hill at the foot of Moel Offrwm, and had little sympathy—so far and so safe was he from the Marcher Lords—with Owen's overbearing ways. Their relations had been strained, therefore; but when Howel asked his kinsman to visit him at Nannau Owen consented without hesitation—yet not without a coat of mail beneath his outer garment. As

they walked in the park with a few retainers they saw a buck at some distance among the trees, and Owen, anxious to please, suggested that Howel should show his well-known prowess with the bow. Howel raised his bow, took aim, paused a moment; then suddenly turned upon his traitor's heel and shot the arrow straight at the heart of his kinsman. One can picture Owen's smile as the arrow rang upon the coat of mail that he wore unseen.

Howel went home no more. What dreadful fate befel him no one knows for certain; for probably all his own retainers were killed and Owen's were too busy to talk. But long afterwards a skeleton was found in a hollow tree quite near the spot where the famous bowman had drawn his bow for the last time. The house of Nannau was burnt to ashes.

Before we cross the bridge to Dolgelley I should like to call attention to a very beautiful drive over the hills between this spot and Maentwrog. Beautiful as it is, it must on no account be substituted for the route by Harlech and the Barmouth

Estuary, by those who are travelling in this neighbourhood for the first time; but those who know the estuary well, or those who are staying at Dolgelley and wish for a circular drive, could not do better than go up the Vale of Ganllwyd and over the hills to Trawsfynydd and Maentwrog, lunch at the Tan-y-Bwlch hotel, and return by Harlech.

For the first few miles the road rises through lovely woods; the tempestuous Mawddach shines behind the trees, and beyond it, bounding the narrow valley, are steep and craggy slopes. At Tyn-y-Groes is a charming little hotel, much frequented by fishermen, with a fine view of the Mawddach and the peak of Moel Offrwm; a delightful place to spend a week in summer, since it is within a drive of many of the loveliest parts of Wales, and has itself an outlook of very striking beauty.

Beyond Tyn-y-Groes the scenery grows wilder and the hills more bare; the road rises rather steeply and the surface is not all that could be wished. Presently we

pass a turning on the left that would lead us, if we followed it, to the top of that strange colossal flight of steps whose lower end we saw at Cwm Bychan, the way by which the Romans climbed this mountain-side; and soon, as we reach the summit of the hill, the many peaks of the Snowdon range come into sight. After this, as is only to be expected, the view is continuously fine till we drop into Maentwrog on a precipitous gradient, and find ourselves in a valley famed for its beauty.

But we must return to Dolgelley.

"Dolgethle," says Leland, who favoured phonetic spelling, "is the best village in this commote." There is not much, if any, of Leland's Dolgelley left, I imagine; but within the memory of this generation there was still standing a battered little cottage, built half of irregular stone-work and half of timber and plaster, that Leland may well have seen, though very likely it did not interest him nearly as much as it would interest us. It has been replaced by an ironmonger's shop, and we now supply ourselves with petrol on the spot

where "Owen, by the Grace of God Prince of Wales," held his council, and drew up the instrument that allied him formally with the French. It was now some little time since Henry IV.'s council had written to him scornfully that the power of the rebels was not so great as it was heretofore reported, and that the people of Wales were but of little reputation; for which reason it seemed good to Henry, he said, "not to go thither in person, but by one of our Lords to do punishment on our said rebels." Henry had said that just three years ago, yet the rebels were still unpunished. The chief rebel, indeed, was now become "our illustrious and most dread Lord, Owen, Prince of Wales," signing alliances with his royal hand and seal, and receiving a gilded helmet as a gift from the King of France.

At Dolgelley we turn eastwards and make our way back to the English border. As a matter of fact we have not actually reached the limits of North Wales, which is divided from South Wales by the river Dyfi, or Dovey. But for our present purpose it will be more convenient to consider a strip

of the North—overlapping our present route—together with a strip of the South, as Mid-Wales, and to return to the border by the laborious but beautiful pass that rises between Dolgelley and Dinas Mawddy.

We have six miles of climbing before us, close under the heights of Cader Idris, through one of the wildest tracts of country in wild Wales, where the road at last rises steeply between rough stone walls across a desolate moor, and a mountain stream dashes below us on the right, and in all probability a flock of little Welsh sheep makes excitedly for the nearest gap. For the Welsh sheep, unlike the sheep of England, has somewhere in its round, woolly head a glimmer of intelligence, and instead of rushing madly past every turning and every gap, knows where it wants to go and goes there with all possible despatch.

At a point six miles above Dolgelley we reach the summit of this precipitous pass, the Bwlch Oerdrws, and the valley lies below us like a gulf. It is a fine scene and a very wild one—wild even when the sun is shining, but still wilder when the

THE MAWDDACH, FROM TYN-Y-GROES HOTEL.

LLANIDLOES.

great bare hills are looming through driving clouds of rain, and wildest and most beautiful of all when the April snow is glistening upon the April gorse.

The steepest part of the descent, the average gradient of which is between 1 in 7 and 1 in 8, is about two miles long. For the rest of the journey, through Dinas Mawddy and Mallwyd, and up the long climb to Cann Office, and so by Llanfair Caereinion to Welshpool, there is nothing to pause for, except tea at Cann Office. This mysterious name, oddly enough, does not appear on Bartholomew's map where the place it denotes is called Llangadfan. The little inn there is very popular with fishermen, who seem to have a wonderful knack of securing homely comfort.

Between Cann Office and Welshpool the scenery gradually becomes more English in character, for Welshpool, though not actually on the border, is very near it. "The grounde about the bankes and valley of Severn there is most pleasunt," says Leland; and "most pleasant," I think, describes this country perfectly. I cannot do better than end in

his words. "And wille I passid this way within a iii miles of Walsch Pole I saw a veri notable hille beyound the valley on the lift hond having iii toppes as iii heddes rising owt of one body. . . . Communely thei be caullid Brethin Hilles. Not far from thes hilles enterith Shropshir."

THROUGH THE HEART OF WALES

I

THROUGH THE HEART OF WALES

ONE may enter Mid-Wales by the Severn Valley, or by Knighton and the Teme. The probability is that one's action in this matter is entirely regulated by circumstances, but if haply it were possible to be guided simply by charm the road across the wild hills would be the road to choose. For wide moorlands, whatever the season, whatever the weather, never fail to be attractive; whereas the valley of the Upper Severn is extremely variable in its appearance. Indeed, I have seen it look almost uninteresting: though in the spring, when on every hill the fruit blossom is mingled with the piercing green of the budding larches, I know no place where the youth of the year has a more engaging air.

country that is neither fertile nor wild. Llangurig itself is a desolate, chilly little place, but it has a nice inn, and I believe the fishing is good. About eight miles beyond it we leave the Wye, now a mere mountain stream, at a point that is only four miles from its source, and after this the scenery grows more and more austere, as we skirt the bare sides of Plynlimmon.

Upon those wind-swept slopes the red dragon of Wales was once unfurled; for here Owen Glyndwr, with only five hundred men, was surprised and surrounded by fifteen hundred of the Flemings of Pembrokeshire. He cut his way through them, and left two hundred of them behind him, and left behind him, too, an unshakable belief that he was a wizard indeed.

These heights are not without grandeur. At one point, indeed, there is a very striking and unusual view, where the road is high upon the hillside, and the river, very far below, twists and curls away into the distance through a narrow but extremely level plain. The surface of this main road

to Aberystwith is above reproach, but after we turn off to the left on the road to the Devil's Bridge it is not so good and there are some rather steep hills.

"If pleasant recollections," says George Borrow, "do not haunt you through life of the noble falls, and the beautiful wooded dingles to the west of the Bridge of the Evil One, and awful and mysterious ones of the monks' boiling cauldron, the long, savage, shadowy cleft, and the grey, crumbling, spectral bridge, I say boldly that you must be a very unpoetical person indeed."

The falls, and the wooded dingles, and the monks' boiling cauldron are still beautiful enough to rouse any poetical feelings that we may possess; but the bridge, alas! is neither crumbling, nor spectral, nor in the least poetical. Three bridges now span the rushing waters of the Mynach, built closely one above the other. The lowest of all, dapper and shining with the cement of the restorer, is the original bridge built by the monks of Strata Florida in the eleventh century and ascribed to the Devil, not from any uncomplimentary feeling towards the

monks, but merely because the bridging of the Mynach was no easy matter and demanded a simple explanation. The bridge above this is the one that Borrow calls modern, though it was built in 1735, and now looks older than the first; the topmost and newest of all is quite a recent achievement, and might well appropriate the name of the original structure, since it entirely destroys all the picturesqueness of the scene. No doubt, however, its existence is necessary, for this is the only way across the gorge: and these beautiful wooded hills and deep valleys, with the two tempestuous streams, the Rheiddol and the Mynach, are by no means dependent for their charm on the famous bridge.

The road from this spot to Aberystwith is of a most striking and uncommon character. It is raised high on one side of the bare hill, and overlooks a deep valley, through which the Rheiddol twists and curves. The great hills beyond the valley are richly green in summer, but in the spring are chiefly reddish brown, with streaks of the vivid larch, and here and there a shining

patch of gorse. A run of twelve miles, mostly downhill, brings us to Aberystwith.

At the first glance, seen from a distance, it is not unpicturesque. It lies at the end of a valley, with the sea beyond it, and in the heart of it the castle tower stands up conspicuously to remind one that Aberystwith was once something more interesting than a popular watering-place. For once all the resources of England were combined in an attack upon this castle. Guns came from Yorkshire, and timber from the Forest of Dean; huge supplies of arms and various murderous concoctions were sent from Hereford, and a shipload of carpenters landed in the bay to turn the timber into machines of war. There was not a young spark in the country, apparently, but thought it incumbent on him as a man of fashion to join Prince Hal outside the walls of Aberystwith.

Yet the end of all this effort and display was merely comic. Glyndwr's garrison at last, half starving, agreed to yield the castle upon a certain day unless Owen meanwhile relieved it. The Prince, too hasty, as he

sometimes was, went off to London joyfully and received the thanks of Parliament for having secured Aberystwith—at the very moment, had he but known it, when Owen and a relieving force were quietly entering the besieged castle!

This was but one of many sieges suffered by Aberystwith, which was always regarded as a place of much importance; so much so, indeed, that Strongbow's castle on this spot had been battered into uselessness before the days of Edward I., who had to build another. Prince Henry and Oliver have left little enough of that. What there is of it—some round towers and a piece of the curtain-wall—is more tidy than romantic. To tell the truth, Aberystwith is not a romantic place.

It has been my happy fortune to read some manuscript letters written by a lady from Mid-Wales towards the end of the eighteenth century. This is what she says of Aberystwith—

"I have inquired about Aberystwith, where the Sea is very rough, and no Apothecary near, and most ignorant people in regard

to illness, which they are so happy to know nothing of, as the Sea is their ownly Physition."

This might be useful as a house-agent's advertisement, if the next sentence were suppressed.

"I think the Sea fogs very unwholesom, but dare not say so, as they are for ever talking about the purity of their air."

The sea is no longer the only physician at Aberystwith; but the purity of the air is still a topic of conversation.

One of its advantages is that it is only fifteen miles from Ystradfflur or Strata Florida; and though this does not lie upon our route, so short a run is but a slight tribute to pay to a place of such great memories. The drive, moreover, will itself repay us. The road follows the Ystwith most of the way, and crosses it at Trawscoed, where splendid beeches overhang the river and masses of rhododendrons line the banks. There is one formidable hill, with a gradient of 1 in 8, from the top of which there is a fine view of winding river and wooded hills. Soon after leaving the Ystwith we join the Teify near its source.

In the Abbey itself there is little to see, but very much to remember. It was founded in the twelfth century by some Cistercian monks on land given by a Norman; but its foundation is often ascribed to that great prince of South Wales, the Lord Rhys, who was one of its chief benefactors. Once it was the grandest house of worship in all Wales, the burial-place of her southern princes, the depository of her archives; but there is little left to show its past greatness but the unique west doorway and the remains of six side chapels—roofed now with corrugated iron! Behind the south transept is a wedge-shaped strip of ground that was the monks' cemetery, where, under a stone carved plainly with a cross, lies Cadell, the brother of the Lord Rhys. The large cemetery that holds the dust of eleven Welsh princes is between the Abbey and the river. "The cœmiteri wherin the cunteri about doth buri is veri large," says Leland, "and meanely waullid with stoone. In it be xxxix great hue trees." There were originally forty of these yew-trees, and now there are but two or three, so it is hardly

likely that one of the survivors should be the tree underneath which Dafydd ap Gwilym, the greatest of Welsh poets, was buried; the tree of which Gruffydd Gryg, his rival, wrote—

> "May lightnings never lay thee low
> Nor archer cut from thee his bow."

Mr. Baring-Gould tells us how these two bards were constantly in a state of feud and bitter rivalry, till an ingenious friend put an end to their quarrels by simply telling each of them that the other was dead, and was to be buried at Strata Florida on such-and-such a day—mentioning the same day in both cases. Each of the poets, in the glow of generosity consequent on the death of a hated rival, composed a beautiful ode in praise of his enemy, and proceeded to the churchyard to read it beside the grave. There, of course, they met; and each, determined to read his ode at any cost, forthwith read it to the hero of it, and buried his enmity instead of his enemy.

It was somewhere within that "meanely

waullid" cemetery that this quaint scene took place; and it was somewhere within these precincts that a thousand frightened children crowded together long ago, waiting to be carried away from their parents and homes in Cardiganshire to the exile in England to which Henry IV. had doomed them. That is an ill-omened name in Ystradfflur—the name of Henry Bolingbroke—for in his fury at the rebellion of Glyndwr he fell upon this sacred place and ruined it, and drove out its monks, and stabled his horses at its High Altar.

To reach Machynlleth, which is our object, we must return to Aberystwith—but we may do this by a slightly different road, diverging at Trawscoed. The surface is better than that of the other, and the road is wider, but there is one bad hill, with a nominal gradient of 1 in 7. As we approach Aberystwith we see, beyond the river, a little place called Llanbadarn Fawr. Here, in very early times, long before the great days of Ystradfflur, there was a famous monastery, founded by St. Padarn, a contemporary of St. David. Like St. David's

ARCHWAY AT STRATA FLORIDA.

UNIV. OF MICH.

NEAR GLANDOVEY.

own monastery, it was laid waste by the Danes.

Passing through Aberystwith we climb out of it on the further side by a long hill. Except the wide view from this hill there is nothing of special attraction in any way till we have passed Tal-y-bont. Then suddenly there comes into sight the headland beyond the Dyfi (Dovey). Far away on the left is the sea, and between us and it lies a wide and absolutely level plain, with Borth showing darkly on the shore. Soon we pass Tre-Taliesin, named from the great bard of Arthur's day, whose grave is said by some to lie on this hillside to the right, and by others to be beside the waters of Geirionydd. Beyond this village we climb through lovely woods of birch and larch, and then we run down, leaving the trees behind us, into the beautiful estuary of the Dyfi. A wide sea of gorse is at out feet; the river winds through the shallows beyond; and, bounding the valley and the view, rises the mighty wall of North Wales.

This is on the left—a wide and splendid landscape; and meanwhile on the right

are wild hills rising from the road, cleft here and there by narrow wooded gorges or tumbling mountain streams. At Ysgubor-y-coed the water dashes down between sharp rocks, and makes a lovely picture with the great mill-wheel and mossy-tiled building that stand beside it; and just beyond Glan Dovey station we catch a momentary glimpse of the steep sides of the beautiful Llyfnant Valley. Thence four level miles bring us to Machynlleth.

There is a charm about Machynlleth. Its wide central street is planted with trees. In most Welsh towns, History, though she has lived in them so long, has rather an uneasy air: tales of valour, or of treachery on a large scale, blend rather incongruously with prim grey houses and slate roofs. But in Machynlleth we are quite prepared to learn that these quaint and quiet streets —and some of the houses, even—are bound up very closely with the picturesque life of the last of the Welsh princes: so closely indeed, that Owen Glyndwr's royal seal figures in the arms of the town. In those low, whitewashed cottages he held his first

parliament; and in that little corner-house in the next street he rested the uneasy head that wore a crown for such a brief and troublous time. It is the oldest house in Wales, they say, but much renovation and a new chimney have destroyed any picturesqueness it ever had; and it is now neither as venerable nor as interesting in appearance as the Old Mayor's House, a timber-and-plaster building at one end of the main street, with gables leaning in all directions. Neither do the whitewashed Houses of Parliament show any signs of their distinguished past—yet here Glyndwr accepted his crown and very nearly lost his life. For among the members of this his first parliament was one who was his enemy, and the sworn man of the House of Lancaster. Davy Gam, "the Crooked," a little red-haired, squinting man who, whatever he was, was no coward, came to this house with the intention of killing Glyndwr, but being betrayed, was thrown into prison for ten years, while his house near Brecon was burnt to ashes. Owen, with unusual forbearance, spared his life,

perhaps in acknowledgment of the man's courage in coming among his enemies single-handed. He showed his courage more honourably at Agincourt. "There are enough to kill," he said of the French just before the battle, "enough to be taken prisoners, and enough to run away." He died on that field, and was knighted by Henry V. as he lay dying. "He lived like a wolf and died like a lion," it has been said of him.

Now, on leaving Machynlleth, supposing it to be our intention to go on to Dolgelley and so to Bala, we have a choice of roads. All the ways are so beautiful, however, that we can hardly go wrong; but those who fix upon the shortest way, by Corris, should know that they will find it well worth while to run down the estuary to Aberdovey and back again. For this estuary of the Dyfi is second only to that of the Mawddach in beauty.

Its best time, certainly, is in the summer, for the hills are thickly wooded; but at all seasons there is a lovely view at every turn of the road. One of those that haunt the memory is from the point where the

road to Aberdovey, after passing through Pennal, comes again within sight of the river. In the foreground is a wide expanse of rich colouring, of red and brown, green and gold and russet; beyond it shines a thin line of silver; and beyond that again rise the hills of South Wales—not so imposing by any means as that massive bulwark of mountains that we saw from the other side and are now close under, but yet very beautiful in colour and bold in outline. As the estuary widens a succession of headlands stretch out before us, one beyond another, and round these the road curves, sometimes very sharply. At the extreme mouth of the estuary lies Aberdovey, in the shelter of the hills.

The same eighteenth-century lady whom I quoted before describes a visit to "Aberdove Seaport," as she calls it. "Down we set at the window," she says, ". . . to see the Sea hempty it self in to a Beautifull serpentine river, at the beginning of which lay ten ships at harbour." One cannot marvel that any one should sit down at a window to watch so strange a phenomenon

as the sea emptying itself into a river. Unfortunately this interesting sight cannot now be promised to visitors at Aberdovey; but the "beginning" of the river still owes much of its picturesque effect to the little quays that jut out into the stream, and the ships of considerable size that lie "at harbour." The best hotel, and it is an extremely nice one, is a short distance beyond the little town, and is perched on the hillside above the golf-links, facing the sea.

It was somewhere in this estuary, probably on the shore of the Traeth Maelgwyn, that a strange scene took place between thirteen and fourteen hundred years ago. Maelgwyn, that King of Gwynedd whose name recurs so often in the history of North Wales, that gigantic man of fitful valour and still more fitful piety, determined to unite all the strength of the west under one ruler, the better to oppose the conquering Saxons. It was agreed that all the princes and knights who had any pretensions should meet together in the estuary of the Dyfi, the dividing-line between North and South Wales; that they should there

seat themselves on chairs upon the shore, and he who contrived to keep his seat the longest should be the king. Then Maelgwyn, having settled these preliminaries, had a wonderful chair made for himself of the wings of birds, waxed. As the tide rose the seats of the other princes were overturned, but Maelgwyn's chair floated on the surface of the sea. So Maelgwyn became chief of all the princes of the west.

From Aberdovey, as I said before, we may, if we choose, drive straight on round the coast by Towyn and Fairbourne, and up the southern side of the Barmouth estuary to Dolgelley. Or we may turn eastward at Towyn, and reach Dolgelley by way of Tal-y-llyn. Or, thirdly, we may return to Machynlleth and drive thence to Dolgelley by Corris.

No motorist should really rest satisfied till he has driven on all these roads, so beautiful are the three. Towyn, I believe, has charms for many, but on the surface it is singularly unattractive. It has a very ancient church, however, built in the twelfth century by Gruffyd ap Cynan, of whom it

was said that he built so many that his country "glittered with whitewashed churches as the heavens are bright with stars." Near it are some extremely interesting old memorial stones; but here, to all appearance, the interest of Towyn begins and ends. Beyond it there are some fine views of the hills as the road turns inland; and again when it turns to the coast and, high on the side of the cliff, curves round into the Barmouth estuary, the effect is really fine. It must have been of this part of the road that a traveller once wrote: "We ascended a precipice, frightful beyond description, on one side of us was the highest ragget Rock I have seen, the stones to appearance lose, and look as if just droping on your heads, some of which have fell a few years ago. The Precipice down to the Mean (Main) Ocean not less than thirty yards, and us travlers not a yard from the side of it, where the waves dash and tide rores, till it made me tremble." Grand as these "ragget" cliffs are, however, the most beautiful part of this drive is in the Barmouth estuary, under the shadow of

THE MAYOR'S HOUSE, MACHYNLLETH.

THE RIVER DULAS.

Cader Idris. But to many travellers in Wales this valley of the Mawddach is thoroughly familiar, and to them I heartily recommend the road by Corris.

From Aberdovey one drives back to a point in the Dyfi Valley almost opposite to Machynlleth. The river Dulas, near the point where it joins the Dyfi, is spanned by a fine old bridge, whose arches have resounded to the tramp of Henry Tudor's followers, as he and they marched eastwards to fight for the crown; and to the tramp of Cromwell's men as they marched westwards to fight, if not for the crown, for everything that goes with it. It is at this point that we turn sharply to the left and follow the course of the Dulas. This opening of the valley of Corris is very lovely, for the river, which has all the impetuosity of a mountain stream, is overhung by splendid trees, and through their stems in the spring we may see the further bank, steep and mossy, and thickly jewelled with primroses. The whole of this narrow and wild valley, indeed, is full of beauty. The road rises gradually to a considerable height; then

beyond Upper Corris, where the landscape is defaced, as so often in Wales, by enormous banks of slate, it drops down by some very steep gradients, amid fine mountain scenery, to the level of Tal-y-llyn.

It is only the eastern extremity of the lake that we see, and this we leave behind us, turning at this point sharply to the right into a defile of extreme barrenness. This narrow gorge, with its towering sides reft and lacerated by landslips, its huge boulders poised as though about to fall, its grey slopes softened only here and there by patches of short grass, is the most utterly, the most desolately savage spot I have seen in Wales. As we leave it and emerge into more open country, we realise that those wild slopes were the foot of Cader Idris, for looking back we see the heavy grey shoulder of the mountain. Soon we reach Cross Foxes, and thence run down through beautiful woods on a delightful gradient to Dolgelley, with the purple hills of the Mawddach estuary showing in a long line above and behind the vivid green of the trees.

THE PASS OF CORRIS, NEAR TAL-Y-LLYN.

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BALA LAKE.

In Dolgelley, as we saw before, all the historical interest is concentrated on a lamp-shop. There is nothing to keep us there, unless we wish for a meal, or perchance a bed, at the "Golden Lion," or unless we mean to use the place, as many do, as a centre for expeditions. But at present our concern is to turn towards the English frontier, and to reach it through Bala and Llanrhaiadr.

For ten miles after we leave Dolgelley the road ascends, persistently but never steeply. The backward views of mountain, wood, and stream are unfailingly lovely on this road, as on all others that converge at Dolgelley; and no less attractive in its own way is the wilder scenery at the top of this hill, which is practically a pass. From the summit we descend to the shores of Bala Lake, and after driving for three miles close beside its waters we reach the little town.

It is not an especially attractive place. The neighbourhood of the lake is of course pleasant, but the hotel—which, by the way, like many Welsh inns, contains some lovely

old furniture—looks out over the street. The scenery of the lake is pretty rather than grand.

Bala must have been more interesting, I think, in Pennant's day. It must certainly have presented an appearance all its own; for he assures us that the entire population—men, women, and children—spent all their time in knitting stockings. They knitted in their doorways, they knitted as they walked about the streets, and on fine days they sat together on the tumulus at the end of the town, and knitted there. On Saturdays the fruit of all this industry was sold, to the value of four or five hundred pounds, in a special stocking-market. This must have been a sight worth seeing.

We may still see the Tomen-y-Bala, the tumulus where the knitters used to sit and sun themselves, and where, very long ago, a little castle stood. The mound has been made very neat, with gravel paths and rhododendrons; and by paying a small sum we may climb to its modest summit and give a thought to the Romans who made the tumulus, and the Britons who made the

castle, and the past generations who made stockings.

Leaving Bala, we may follow the Dee to Corwen, and there join the great London and Holyhead road; and this is by far the simplest route we can choose.

The route we should certainly *not* choose is the so-called road from Bala to Lake Vyrnwy, the reservoir of Liverpool. The scenery round this lake is very beautiful, it is true, and an excellent hotel stands high on the hillside above the water; and since there is no railway among these wild hills, this is one of the places that show the uses of the motor-car most strikingly. But Vyrnwy should be approached from Shropshire, by way of Llanfyllin. The road that connects it with Bala is a narrow, precipitous pass, cut on the side of a slope that is at some points almost a precipice, unprotected by any kind of fence, sloping downwards on the outer side, and crossed at short intervals by natural water-channels It is a discouraging picture, and the reality is, to put it mildly, uncomfortable.

As an alternative to the Corwen road we

may cross the Holy Dee at the very spot where the "wizard stream," as Milton calls it—that stream that had the gift of prophesying good or evil fortune to the cause of Wales—flows from the parent waters of Llyn Tegid or Bala Lake, and following a mountain road of many "dangerous" hills, visit the waterfall at Llanrhaiadr before we pass into Shropshire.

The fall is at a lonely spot about four miles beyond the village of Llanrhaiadr, which is itself a pretty place with a nice inn. The road that leads to Pistyll-y-Rhaiadr is little more than a lane, but one may drive up almost to the very foot of the fall. "Prodigious high," says the letter-writer I have so often quoted: "and seemingly the hend of the world." There is really some excuse for this dramatic statement. An abrupt mass of rock rises before us impassably. On each side of it are pine-woods, climbing the craggy slopes. There is an air of finality about the place: it is "seemingly the hend of the world."

A TOUR IN SOUTH WALES

A TOUR IN SOUTH WALES

FOR those whose affections are at all equally divided between natural beauty and historical interest the map of South Wales presents a dilemma. The imperative thing is to avoid the once beautiful hills and valleys that are now scarred, and rent, and blackened with coal-dust; and this may be done by taking either the moorland road above the mining country, or the level road below it near the sea. Now I, who know both these roads, assure you that in adopting either of these courses you will miss much. For if you choose the lower road, tempted by its excellence, you will miss some of the finest scenery in South Wales, which, though not to be compared with the North, is yet beautiful; and if you choose the upper one you will miss the romance of Beaupré, and the very ancient memories of Llantwit

Major, and you will, moreover, miss a good many miles of as fine a road as ever made an engine purr. There is only one way out of this dilemma, namely, to follow a zigzag course, from the sea to the hills, from the hills to the sea, and so enjoy the best of both roads.

To avoid the mines we must aim very low; at Cardiff or Caerphilly. And if we are approaching the Border from Monmouth or Hereford, or the Midlands, we shall probably, just before we reach the spreading outskirts of Newport, pass through a village with a great name. A dull, sleepy-looking village it is, standing in a commonplace landscape beside a very dirty stream, a place entirely without superficial attractions. But it is a name to conjure with. Caerleon-upon-Usk, the City of Legions! Once it "abounded in wealth above all other cities, . . . and passing fair was the magnificence of the kingly palaces thereof." The gilded roofs of the Romans glittered here beside the Usk, and the great amphitheatre that may still be traced once echoed to the shouts of the second legion: towers and temples, baths and aqueducts and splendid buildings stood

where now a few poor houses keep alive the name of Caerleon. Round its shining palaces grew up a world of legend. We know all about the fine doings at Arthur's coronation here: how he and Guinevere were crowned in different churches, and how the music in both was "so transporting" that the congregations ran to and fro between one church and the other all day; and how a banquet of great splendour followed, with Caius, the server, dressed in ermine, and Bedver, the butler, waiting with all kinds of cups, and hosts of noblemen handing the dishes; and how, after the feast, the soldiers got up a sham fight to amuse the ladies, who sat on the town walls and "darted amorous glances in a sportive manner." And in the "Mabinogion" we are given a more domestic picture of King Arthur at Caerleon-upon-Usk: a picture of him in his palace dozing upon a seat of green rushes covered with flame-coloured satin, with a red satin cushion under his elbow, while Guinevere and her handmaidens sit at their needlework by the window, and a group of knights are drinking mead from a golden

goblet. And at Caerleon, too, it was that Maxen Wledig, the truant Emperor of Rome, built one of three great castles for Helen, his wife. He had seen her first in a dream, and sought her by land and sea, and having found her he forgot his Empire and lived in Britain seven years. So they made them a new Emperor in Rome.

"And this one wrote a letter of threat to Maxen. There was nought in the letter but only this, 'If thou comest, and if thou ever comest to Rome.' And even unto Caerleon came this letter to Maxen, and these tidings. Then sent he a letter to the man who styled himself Emperor in Rome. There was nought in that letter also but only this, 'If I come to Rome, and if I come.'"

So, through the Middle Ages, the memory of the great days of Caerleon was preserved in legend.

Long before we have finished dreaming of King Arthur and his red satin cushion the tram-lines of Newport force themselves upon our attention. Newport was so called, I believe, because it superseded Caerleon, the old port, of which Leland says: "Very great

shyppes might wel cum now to the town, as they did in the Romaynes tyme, but that Newport Bridge is a lette."

Before leaving Newport any one who is likely to be hungry soon will do well to secure a meal, for though Cardiff is not far away the ruins of Caerphilly take some time to see, and the little town cannot be depended upon for food. And we must on no account miss seeing Caerphilly; for this vast ruin covers more ground than any other in this island, and, moreover, has the special distinction of being a characteristically Edwardian castle of a date earlier than Edward's. It was chiefly the work of Gilbert de Clare, the Red Earl of Gloucester, whose architect, unlike that great artist, Henry de Elfreton, thought little of beauty when he designed these mighty walls, but altogether of strength. "Waules of a wonderful thickness," says Leland; and of a wonderful thickness they are, and of a wonderful tenacity too, seeing that one of the great bastions that were mined with gunpowder in the Civil War was only half ruined, and the other half has been leaning

at a most surprising angle ever since. The history of the ruins is not at all in proportion to their size; and, indeed, it is possible that their size and strength may have acted as a deterrent to the makers of history. There is a story that Edward II. took refuge here with the Despensers; but even these unyielding walls failed to give any real sense of security to that poor spirit and at the first word of his enemies' approach he hurried away, preferring to trust to disguise. He chose the inappropriate *rôle* of a farm labourer—this indolent, boudoir-King, who had never done a day's work in his life—and he failed signally to please his master, who was as anxious to be rid of him as his subjects were. It was soon after this that he was captured and led away to the horrors of Berkeley Castle.

On the direct route from Caerphilly to Cardiff there rises such a precipitous hill that the longer way by Nantgarw is really the best; and unless Cardiff has some special attraction for us there is no need to thread our way through its modern streets and its maze of tram-lines. For the Cardiff of the

Romans, and of the Welsh princes of Morganwg, and of the Norman barons, is altogether overpowered by the Cardiff of commerce; and though there is a fragment left of the castle that has sheltered so many crowned heads at various times, the castle in which poor blind Robert of Normandy was a prisoner for twenty-eight years, yet even this is modernised and closed to the public.

But in Llandaff, which is now practically a suburb of Cardiff, there are still signs of age: a picturesque green and restored cross, some pretty old houses, and the cathedral of the most ancient see in the island. For even when St. Teilo of the sixth century laid the foundation of the first cathedral the bishopric of Llandaff had been in existence for more than five hundred years. By the eleventh century Teilo's cathedral was past repair; and when the "business of the Cross was publicly proclaimed" here it was in a new building that the Archbishop celebrated mass —the same building, more or less, that stands down there in that curious hollow to-day. More or less: for the restorations of this greatly chastened cathedral have been many,

and it has narrowly escaped suffering even more terrible things at the hands of its well-wishers. Jasper Tudor's beautiful and uncommon west tower, for instance, was once threatened by an eighteenth-century bishop, a versatile soul who wrote a successful "Treatise on the Modes." He was evidently more capable of dealing with the modes than with ecclesiastical architecture, for we hear that he was seized with a longing to remove Jasper's tower and replace it with a rustic porch.* For once the poverty of the see was a fortunate circumstance, and saved the tower. But no doubt that same poverty injured the building greatly on many occasions; for at one time the see was so cruelly robbed by the Crown that its brave and humorous bishop had himself presented to Henry VIII. as the Bishop of Aff. "I was the Bishop of Llandaff," he explained, "but lately the *land* has been removed." †

The tombs of Llandaff Cathedral are of

* "The Book of South Wales," by the Rev. S. Baring-Gould.

† "The March and Borderland of Wales," by A. G. Bradley.

CAERPHILLY CASTLE.

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BEAUPRÉ CASTLE.

great interest; and it is with real pleasure that one sees the new, for once, not unworthy to be beside the old. The recumbent figure of marble on the grave of Dean Vaughan is really beautiful.

As we climb the long hill a mile or two beyond Llandaff, we see Cardiff stretched out below us, a forest of masts and tall chimneys—an impressive symbol in its way. Then, when we reach the level ground, we forget everything for a time but the sheer delight of moving on a perfect road—forget even the heights of Exmoor showing faintly across the water on the left, and on the right the wild hills of Glamorganshire rolling away into the distance.

Now, at Cowbridge, it is necessary to come to a decision. If it should be too much for the resolution of an ardent motorist to leave this road, he may pursue his way to Neath without "lette," as Leland would say; but for all antiquarians, artists, and other lovers of romance and beauty, the finger-post points very resolutely to a detour by Beaupré, Llantwit, St. Donat's, and Ewenny.

About two miles south of Cowbridge is

Old Beaupré (Bewper). Do not climb the stile and walk across the fields, but drive on a hundred yards or so to the gate; for this grass-grown, deserted avenue is the fitting approach to the spellbound house of the Bassetts, that strange mixture of splendour and squalor, with its delicate carvings and dainty Corinthian pillars and its air of utter desolation. We know very well as we look at it that fair faces once looked down through those Tudor windows, and gay satins swept between the classic columns of the doorway, and the walls echoed to music and singing and laughter, until the fatal day that an enchantment was laid upon the beautiful white doorway of the love-lorn Welshman who learnt his art in Italy, and upon the avenue that once led the Bassetts out to war and home to love, and upon every stone of the old castle, so that it became a farmhouse. And now the fluted pillars and carved friezes are green with moss and fringed with ferns, and the walls echo to nothing but the clucking of innumerable hens.

Beaupré is not greatly visited. There is, indeed, nothing to see but that strange,

incongruous doorway and the ghosts that flutter round it; but it is one of those eloquent, unforgettable places through which, for a moment, one seems to be actually in touch with the life that they have seen.

At Llantwit Major the interest is of a very different kind. Here there is not very much to attract the artist, but to the antiquary and historian "the dwelling-place and home of the Blessed Illtyd" must surely be of the first importance. For it was here that the Breton saint, St. Iltutus, or Illtyd, founded a monastery and university that made a very deep mark upon the life of the sixth century; for its professors educated not only all the princes of the west, but also every illustrious Welshman—bishop, saint, or scholar—of the day. It is not surprising that an institution of its size and brilliancy—for its 2,400 students filled four hundred houses—should have seized the imagination of early writers, and given rise to so much picturesque legend that it is hard to know the truth. Some say that St. David himself was taught by St. Illtyd, and that Gildas the historian, called the Wise, and Taliesin, the bard of the Radiant

Brow, were also brought up here. Of Illtyd himself the tale is told that he was originally a soldier, but hearing the call, he forsook his profession and his wife for the life of a hermit; and when his poor wife came to him, one day as he was working in the fields, he silently turned away from her, and stood so, with his back to her, till she left him in despair. This is a pathetic foundation for all the scholarship and saintliness of the sixth century in Wales, and one can only hope, for the sake of Illtyd's conscience when he was a comfortable professor, that it is untrue. Of all the four hundred houses and seven halls of his university not a stone is now left; but in the church, which is itself very full of interest, there are some wonderful monuments, one of them being a memorial raised to St. Illtyd by one of his pupils, Samson, a saint himself. The head of the cross is gone, but on the shaft the beautiful Celtic designs are still clear and the words still legible to those who can read them—"Samson placed this cross for his soul."

Just beyond Llantwit and nearer to the

Bristol Channel is St. Donat's, which, as Leland says, "stondith on a meane hille a quarter of a mile from the Severn Se." This castle, partly Norman and partly Tudor, has been inhabited ever since the Norman conquest of Glamorgan; and so, as "the parkes booth and the castell long to . . . a gentilman of very fair landes in that countery," we can see no more than a glimpse of towers above the trees. But we pass close to the churchyard, and there we may see the very beautiful and uninjured Celtic cross.

From St. Donat's we may rejoin the main road at Bridgend; but in this country, where good accommodation is not always to be found, it is well to know that there is a very nice modern hotel at Southerndown, with the Channel and the Exmoor coast in front of it and the trees and Castle of Dunraven near at hand. The actual building of Dunraven is new, but a castle has stood on the same spot for many generations, through many tragedies. In Henry VIII.'s reign the lord of Dunraven, Boteler, or Butler, lost all his children but one on the same day. He saw them die, perhaps, for the windows of

his castle looked out across the waters that drowned them. Only one girl was left, and through her Dunraven passed to the Vaughans, who do not always seem to have made a good use of its position. For in Tenby Church lies the dust of a certain Walter of that house, who figures darkly in one of those moral tales—one might almost call them tracts—of which one occasionally hears in actual life. In Walter's day, which was also the day of Queen Mary, these shores of Dunraven twinkled with treacherous lights, which lured unwary ships to the shore, causing their complete destruction and the great enrichment of the lord of the manor. At last, after years of this villainy, he was waiting one night for the fruits of his labours, waiting while the doomed ship was shaken to pieces and the bodies of her crew were one by one washed ashore. The last body that came was that of his own sailor-son.

Whether we approach Bridgend from Llantwit or from Southerndown, we shall see on our right the embattled tower of Ewenny among the trees. The restored conventual buildings of this very ancient

Benedictine Priory are now a private house, but by leaving the high-road we may pass the fortified gateway that once stood between the monks and their enemies. There is no finer example, I believe, of a monastery that is also a castle, and no doubt it is partly owing to the strength of its defences that the Priory of Ewenny still stands in its original Norman austerity, not as a picturesque ruin, but as a parish church. With the exception of one or two Tudor windows, it is pure Norman throughout, very simple, very dignified; and it is still divided, according to ancient custom, into two separate churches that were used respectively by the monastery and the parish at large. The founder, whose beautiful tomb is wonderfully well preserved, was Maurice de Londres, whose name we shall meet again in a less amiable connection at Kidwelly. A great deal has been done in the way of restoring and preserving Ewenny by its owners, the ancient lords of Coity, whose great castle lies in ruins a few miles away. The Norman marchers of their house, it is said, set out to win the lands of Coity

by force of arms, but seeing the fair daughter of the Welshman who owned them, he was himself won, and never a blow was struck, for Coity became his by marriage. How much of this story is true I do not know, but it is certainly true that his descendants have lived within a few miles of the spot from that day to this.

At Bridgend we rejoin the road that we left so reluctantly at Cowbridge, and soon, on the right, we pass the hills of Margam, at whose foot are the fragments of a famous Cistercian abbey, more celebrated, we are told, for its charitable deeds than any of that Order in Wales; while on the left there stretch between us and the sea the dreary sands that long ago buried—"shokid and devourid"—the castle and lands of Kenfig. The hills, cleft here and there with deep wooded valleys, are every moment drawing nearer; a strip of glittering sea appears beyond the sands, and beyond that again are the Mumbles. For a little time the masts of Aberavon rise picturesquely on the skyline, but they are too soon replaced by the chimneys of Briton Ferry.

EWENNY PRIORY.

UNIV. OF

NEATH ABBEY.

It was here that the travellers of old days used to ford the river Neath. It was a dangerous ford, famous for its quicksands. Wherefore a certain twelfth-century bishop of St. David's, being of a prudent temperament and desirous to cross, selected one of his minor clergy to ford the river before him, a "chaplain of those parts," who had lately incurred the bishop's displeasure, and had been suspended. The chaplain meekly consented; took the bishop's best horse for the purpose; crossed in safety, and forthwith rode away. And it was only when the bishop restored the cure that the chaplain restored the horse.

This pleasant little story, recalled by the name of the ugly smoky town of Briton Ferry, will help us through the dismal streets that lead to Neath.

Neath itself is not an attractive town. Its abbey to Leland "semid the fairest abbay in al Wales." To-day it is perhaps the most pathetic. During its last and most splendid days a Welsh bard sang of it and of the monks who lived in it; sang of its towers and cloisters, and coloured windows

and princely shields; of its columns of blue marble and of the painted archangels on its roof. It was just at this time that it seemed to Leland so fair, that is to say just before Leland's employer, Henry VIII., silenced the "peaceful songs of praise" of its white monks for ever. Even now we can guess at its past splendour, for though the blue marble and the archangels are gone, the crypt still has its vaulted roof, and through the heavy ivy there are fragments visible of the gleaming white stone with which it was once faced. It stands, unspeakably desolate, on the low, squalid outskirts of the town, amid a waste of scrap-iron and nettles and rubbish; but when Edward II. came to beg for a night's lodging under its roof, when Neath was little more than a village and a castle, and there were no shunting, shrieking trains between the abbey and the hills, this must indeed have seemed a beautiful refuge for a tired, hunted king.

For close behind the abbey the hills begin to rise, and through them the river Neath cleaves its way to the sea in a valley that

will lead us, if we follow it, to extremely desirable things. Ultimately the road will lead us to Brecon, by no means to be despised in itself, but it is rather for the sake of the miles of moorland that lie between that we must here strike up into the hills in a way that may seem eccentric till we know what they are like.

The Vale of Neath itself is famous for its lovely scenery, its woods and mountains and river. The road is practically level as far as Glyn-Neath, where, if the day is young, and the mood enterprising, we may, instead of keeping to our rightful road, diverge for a mile or so to Pont Neath Fechan. Thence the active-minded and able-bodied may visit a series of very pretty waterfalls on the river Mellte. This entails a considerable walk of a rough kind, but it also gives one an excuse for exploring a little more of this lovely moorland country: for the best way to approach the falls is to drive up for two miles into the hills and so reach the river from above.

But probably the most usual course is, at Glyn-Neath, to turn towards Hirwain.

It is after this point that the really distinctive features of this run become apparent, the features that make the road essentially one for motorists; for no railway crosses these hills, and if there be strong-limbed bicyclists who do, they cannot often be women, I think. For the road that seems to the engine of a car to be merely gently undulating, is really climbing steadily upwards for miles. Gradually the scene becomes wilder and wilder, more and more desolate, till at last we are spinning over a moor as wide as the eye can see, on a road that winds visibly before us far away into the distance. Range beyond range, the hills completely encircle us: stern, bare hills with rugged outlines, and never a tree to soften them; and in the foreground great sweeping curves covered with short grass and here and there a glowing patch of heather. Then, when the summit is reached, and Cardiff waterworks are passed, begins the descent of nine miles on a perfect surface, close under the shoulder of the Brecon Beacons. I think this gentle descent is one of the most perfect runs,

from a motoring point of view, that I have ever enjoyed; and if, as is likely, there is a touch of evening softness over the great hills, few people will regret having forsaken their direct westward road for the sake of this drive. Close under the Beacons lies Brecon.

A prodigious amount of fighting has raged round this peaceful-looking little town. It was not without bloodshed that Brychan the Irishman, in the fifth century, made this country his own with complete thoroughness, supplying it not only with a new name but with a new population (for he is said to have had forty-nine children); and Brecon was one of the many places that were attacked and overcome by the army of Alfred's warlike daughter Ethelfleda; and truly there was no lack of fighting in the days of the Normans, the Neuf-Marché, and the de Braose. It was Bernard de Neuf-Marché, or Newmarch, who built the castle, once "very large, strong, and wele mainteynid," but now only a remnant, a bit of battlemented wall and a tower, which passed through many stormy

experiences before it came to the strangest end to which, surely, a castle was ever brought. For it was the inhabitants of Brecon themselves who, feeling that they had figured sufficiently in the annals of their country, demolished their own castle. It was during the Civil War, and a siege seemed imminent. The simplest way of avoiding this was to remove the castle.

Brecon might well be tired of fighting. Newmarch had fortified it well, with walls and gates and the "keepe of the castel very large and faire," but it required all its defences and more, for a border castle was never safe. From the family of Newmarch it passed to that of de Braose, and they lost it again, not by the sword but by the seditious spirit and shrewd tongue of a woman. Matilda de St. Valerie, the wife of William de Braose, "uttered reproachful language against King John," which though perfectly just, was rash. She lost not only her castle, but her husband and finally her life, for Brecon became Crown property; de Braose, after slaughtering the King's

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BRECON.

GATEWAY KIDWELLY CASTLE.

garrison, fled to Ireland; and Matilda was starved to death in prison.

If we spend a night in Brecon we may sit in the pretty garden of the hotel under the shadow of the last remaining wall of Newmarch's castle. Opposite us, filling almost the whole landscape, are the solemn Beacons; just below us is the Usk and its picturesque bridge.

We must cross that bridge to reach Carmarthen; and following the course of the Usk, pass through Trecastle, where the scenery becomes strikingly beautiful as the road cleaves a narrow gorge and then runs gently down for miles between wooded hills. At Llandovery we enter the valley of the Towy.

There is nothing to detain us at Llandovery; but as the gay flowers of the Castle Inn catch our eye in passing we may remember that George Borrow once spent a night there; and the remains of the castle hard by may perhaps call to mind the great chieftain Griffith ap Nicholas, who was lord of Dynevor and Kilgerran as well as of Llandovery and many another

castle. He was also a Justice of the Peace, and a harbourer of thieves; a *protégé* of the House of Lancaster who yet died in fighting for the house of York at Mortimer's Cross: not a very conventional person, in short.

We leave the fragments of his castle on our left, and, on a practically level road, follow the slow-flowing Towy through Llangadoch to Llandeilo. This pretty little place, where there is a really nice inn, was once dignified with the name of Llandeilo Vawr, or the Great; probably because of its close proximity to the great castle of Dynevor. If we pause for a moment on the bridge that here crosses the Towy we shall see reflected in the river a thickly wooded bluff. Among these trees are the ruins of Dynevor, perhaps the most important stronghold of the princes of South Wales. It was in the ninth century that Roderic the Great built the first castle here, and from that day forward till Roderic's fortress had for many years been replaced by a Norman one, Dynevor passed from hand to hand, from Welsh to English and from English to

Welsh, and from one turbulent chieftain to another. It seems to have been regarded more or less as the key to South Wales; for on one occasion Henry II. sent a special spy to inquire into the strength of Dynevor and the general character of the country. This artless knight asked his way of a Welsh dean, and was, as he might have expected led by a route so wild, so rough, and so extremely circuitous that the castle seemed to be practically inaccessible. By way of heightening the effect this humorous divine paused at intervals to satisfy his hunger with handfuls of grass. It was the custom in that poor country, he said. The knight returned to Henry with the report that the country round Dynevor was "uninhabitable, vile, and inaccessible, only affording food to a beastly nation, living like brutes."

Within a few miles of Dynevor there is another castle that looks as if it might well have been inaccessible—Cerrig Cennen. It is worth while to drive a few miles out of our way to see this circlet of towers on its pale grey crag, dominating the whole landscape of rounded hills. It is best to approach

it by Derwydd Station, partly because the more direct route leads over a long and precipitous hill, and partly because from this side one's first view of the old fortress is more striking. I think there is little to be gained by trying to drive close to the actual ruins: the impressive effect is in the distant outline of this strange and sudden crag, on which, it is said, a Knight of the Round Table built his fortress before the Norman of later days made it his stronghold.

From Llandeilo to Carmarthen we have a choice of roads. The upper one is perhaps slightly the faster of the two, but from the lower there is a better view of Dynevor, and Dryslwyn Castle, and Abergwili, the palace of the bishops of St. David's. In Carmarthen itself there are few relics left of a history that begins in the days of the Romans and has been stormy to a most unusual degree; so stormy, indeed, that one marvels the place exists at all. The wicked Vortigern, King of Britain in the fifth century, is said to have built a castle here, to defend himself

against a too persistent saint who was trying, quite in vain, to turn him from the many errors of his ways. He had first taken refuge at Rhayader, but, says Nennius the historian, "St. Germanus followed him with all the British clergy, and upon a rock prayed for his sins during 40 days and 40 nights." So the worried King fled here to Carmarthen and built a castle in which to hide. But, says the story, "the saint as usual followed him there and with his clergy fasted and prayed . . . and on the third night a fire fell suddenly from heaven and totally burnt the castle." How many times since then Carmarthen has been burnt to the ground and besieged and plundered I do not know, but one or other of these incidents is casually recorded on nearly every page of the History of Wales. But Carmarthen, like hope, "springs eternal." Among the many who burnt it is Owen Glyndwr, who at the very time that the foolish legend describes him as sitting in a tree watching the Battle of Shrewsbury was really occupied, not only in destroying this town, but also, as though influenced by the reputed birthplace

of Merlin, in having his fortune told by a soothsayer brought from Gower for the purpose. But though this brave fortune-teller prophesied evil things they were not fulfilled. Owen had still many successes before him, and his dealings with this ill-fated town of Carmarthen made a great sensation. There is an agitated letter still existing which the Archdeacon of Hereford, the "lowly creature," as he signed himself, of Henry IV., wrote in "haste, great haste," to implore that King for help. "And note," he adds in a postscript, "on Friday last Kemerdyn town is taken and burnt, and the castle yielded . . . and slain of the town of Kemerdyn more than L persons. Written in right haste on Sunday; and I cry your mercy and put me in your high grace that I write so shortly; for by my troth that I owe to you, it is needful." The exciting effect of Owen's presence, we see, was of somewhat wide radius. Yet even Owen could not suppress Carmarthen for more than a short time. Leland tells us of two "reparations done on the castel," and in his day, he says, it was "veri fair and doble waullid." Even now there is some of

it left, but unless we exceed the speed-limit and refuse to pay the fine we shall probably not see it, as it has been made into a prison.

But even the modern streets that have risen from so many ashes are not without their own memories of the great. They were once lined with shouting, excited crowds, gathered from all the country round to see Nelson drive through the town: and through them passed the strange funeral procession of Richard Steele, who was carried by night, attended by twenty-five torch-bearers, to his grave in St. Peter's Church. Above it a modern brass has been placed of late years, but for long the grave was, at his own dying request, left nameless. "I shall be remembered by posterity," he said. There are other monuments worth seeing in St. Peter's Church: the tomb of Sir Rhys ap Thomas, to whose efforts Henry VII. owed much in his quest for the crown; and a mural tablet of the seventeenth century, to "virtuous Anne, the lady Vaughan," who was, we learn, "the choice elixir of mortalitie."

From Carmarthen we must certainly not neglect to visit Kidweli, ten miles away near the sea, for there we shall find much of that visible romance that has, by storm and stress, been battered out of the county town. Kidweli once had walls, and three gates, and a priory of Black Monks, as well as the castle that still stands above the river Gwendraeth in all its imposing simplicity. The round towers and the curtain-wall and the great gateway have a very distinctly Edwardian character, but Caradoc of Llancarvan says there was a castle built here quite at the end of the twelfth century by Rhys ap Griffith, that great prince of South Wales who is known in Welsh history as The Lord Rhys; and even in those destructive days a hundred years was a short time for a castle to last. Probably Rhys built it and Edward repaired it, giving it the special character of his own work, but not entirely wiping out the work of Rhys. In this way we may account for the name of Gwenllian's Tower, for Rhys had a much-loved daughter Gwenllian, "a woman of such incomparable beauty, and exceeding in all feminine quali-

fications, that she was accounted the fairest and best accomplished lady in all the country." She had fine traditions behind her, but they were not so much "feminine" as warlike; for her father Rhys was "the protection of his country, the splendour of arms, the arm of power," and her great uncle was the valiant Owen Gwynedd, and her grandmother was that gallant lady after whom she was doubtless named, Gwenllian the wife of Griffith. It was quite near Kidweli that this other Gwenllian died. In her husband's absence she led his men to battle against the Norman invader, Maurice de Londres, whose grave we saw in his priory-church of Ewenny. Her forces were defeated, and she herself, by order of de Londres, was beheaded there and then. Her brother Owen Gwynedd, however, was still alive, and he saw to it that the reckoning was heavy.

The road from Carmarthen to Tenby lies at first through rather dull country, but after a time passes between extremely pretty wooded hills. Presently we catch sight of the sea shining at the end of a deep valley, and after this a delightful run

on a downward gradient carries us within sight of Tenby, the most charming of watering-places. Now, it is not altogether an artificial classification if we divide the civilised world into two parties: those who delight in watering-places and those who flee from them. For this taste or distaste is really, more or less, an indication of temperament, and at the end of half an hour one could usually guess correctly in which of the two classes to place a new acquaintance. But I really defy any one to dislike Tenby. There is something endearing about it. From the roadside the cliffs drop steeply to the sands below—very yellow sands sweeping in long curves to the edge of a brilliantly green sea, while beyond them the long headlands stretch one behind the other, mere blurs of purple or misty blue. On the right the remnant of the castle stands upon a rock, and below it there juts into the sea a picturesque little pier, entirely for use, and innocent of pavilion or bandstand. Here the innumerable trawlers take shelter, till in the early morning they unfurl their crimson or brown

GOSCAR ROCK, TENBY.

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MANORBIER CASTLE, NEAR TENBY.

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MANORBIER CASTLE, NEAR TENBY.

sails, and one by one glide out into the bay—a brave sight, and one that calls to mind the early name of this place, Dynbych-y-Pysgod, the Little Town of Fish.

There is something almost incongruous in the thought of the many sieges that this quiet, sunny town has suffered. From very early days it played an active part in the history of this strange English corner of Wales, and if its walls and gateways are still standing to add to its beauty, this is not for want of use, but because their uses were so constant that they were kept in good order. Of the castle, indeed, little enough remains: a ruined tower, an archway, and a fragment of wall are all that is left on the rock that juts out so picturesquely into the green sea.

But if the shrewd blows of several centuries have left us little of Tenby Castle, it is far otherwise with the splendid walls and towers of Manorbier, which stand close above the sea a few miles further along the same coast. To see Manorbier at its best one should approach it from the road called the Ridgeway, and this route, too, has the

advantage of commanding, here and there, some very lovely views of the coast, of Lydstep and Caldey Island. It is well to know that on Sunday no strangers are admitted within the gate of Manorbier.

It stands, as Leland says, betwixt two "hillettes, between the wich the Severn Se gulfith in"—a fine setting for its battlemented walls and towers, the "turrets and bulwarks" of which Giraldus proudly speaks. That most delightful chronicler declares this to be the pleasantest spot in Wales, and then half apologises for his enthusiasm over this "his native soil, his genial territory." We may forgive him for his love of the place, even if we think he goes a little too far, for this Gerald de Berri the Norman, who oddly enough has been known to all who have come after him as Giraldus the Welshman, was born here at Manorbier; and down there on the shore are the sands where he played as a child, building, we are told, not castles, but always churches and abbeys.

Strange enough this belligerent-looking building seems to have no history. It has,

apparently, led an entirely domestic life. We hear of mills and ponds, of parks and dovecots in connection with it, but of siege and bloodshed not a word. The great, grim walls and bastions, however, must have added greatly to the peace and comfort of the Norman barons who lived behind them, and they certainly add very much to our pleasure.

Climbing again to the Ridgeway we turn to the left, with a view to seeing Lamphey, Pembroke, and the Stack Rocks before, following in the footsteps of many a pilgrim, we visit the shrine of St. David.

Lamphey Palace was for several centuries one of the dwellings of the Bishop of St. David's; and a good deal of it was built by Bishop Gower, whose "mason's mark," so to speak, is the arcaded parapet so conspicuous here and at his cathedral city. Bishop Gower seems to have been the benefactor of this see, as Bishop Barlow was its evil genius. It was owing to the latter that Lamphey passed to the Crown, and thence to the house of Devereux; and so it came to pass that in this sequestered corner

Robert, Earl of Essex, passed the early years of a life that was destined to be anything but sheltered, and played his childish games with no thought of a capricious queen or of Tower Hill. And with him, no doubt, played his sister Penelope, whom the pen of Sir Philip Sidney has made more familiar to us as "Stella."

From Lamphey two miles of level road will take us to Pembroke, and to the castle that is perhaps the most impressive in all this land of relics, where the castles are so strangely thick upon the ground. The great walls rise upon a rock whose base is lapped by the waters of Milford Haven; in the centre stands the mighty double keep, and round it is a ring of bastions; on the town side is the entrance-gate, flanked by massive towers. There is something peculiarly imposing about this gateway, whose implacable strength seems all the more uncompromising from its being unsoftened by ivy and very little discoloured by time, though its fine effect is, of course, cruelly marred by the lawn-tennis nets that seem so often to be regarded as pleasing and appropriate addi-

tions to mediæval castles. Pembroke, unlike Manorbier, is full of history; there has been no lack of sieges here. Even before the building of this castle there were stirring doings round this rock: fierce attacks and wily stratagems, not unmixed, some say, with romance. There was a "slender fortress" here, built by Arnulph de Montgomery of stakes and turf—a poor defence one would have thought, but apparently sufficient to bear a good deal under the guardianship of that "worthy and discreet" constable, Gerald de Windsor, grandfather of our Giraldus. He showed his discretion on one occasion, when the stakes and turf were besieged by the Welsh, and his garrison was extremely short of food, by cutting up the last few beasts that remained to them, and throwing the pieces to the enemy. In our day this would be described, not as discretion, but as "bluff," and it was as successful as that quality so often is. It is said by some that it was this same Gerald who built the existing castle, but there seems to be a good deal of uncertainty on the subject; and even more uncertainty as to

which castle it was from which Gerald's wife Nest, who was less discreet, apparently, than her husband, was carried off by a Welsh prince, not without encouragement from the lady. But when one hears that the discreet Gerald escaped on this occasion by creeping down a drain-pipe, one feels that there was some excuse after all for Nest. But these are mere traditions. What is very certain is that one of the stern entrance-towers was the birthplace of Henry VII., who lived here with his mother through the early years of his life, and after his exile in Brittany landed only a few miles away at Dale, where he won the Welsh at once to his cause by unfurling the Red Dragon of Uther. When Leland was here he was shown the room in which Henry was born, and in it "a chymmeney new made with the armes and badges of King Henri the VII."; but this fireplace must have vanished long ago, for even the local guide-books do not profess to know the room of Henry's birth.

There was a memorable siege of Pembroke in the Civil War—memorable not only

ENTRANCE TOWER, PEMBROKE CASTLE.

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PEMBROKE COAST.

because of its importance, but because the leaders of the Royalist garrison were renegade Roundheads. Cromwell's guns were lying useless in the sand, for the ship that carried them had run aground; but undismayed he determined to starve the garrison out. "Here is a very desperate enemy," he wrote to Fairfax, "who being put out of all hope of mercy, are resolved to endure to the uttermost extremity, being very many of them gentlemen of quality and thoroughly resolved." They yielded at last, and "Drunken Colonel Payer," as Carlyle calls the renegade, "full of brandy and Presbyterian texts of Scripture," being indeed out of all hope of mercy, was shot at Covent Garden. Beyond hope of mercy, too, was the traitor who, by betraying the source of the castle's water-supply to Cromwell, was the cause of the surrender. Cromwell, with characteristic promptitude, cut the drain-pipes and hanged his informant on the spot; and not many years ago some workmen found the broken pipes, and close beside them some human bones.

About eight miles beyond Pembroke are

the Stack Rocks. The road is hilly and the gates across it are exasperatingly numerous; but these are but small discomforts, and the reward is very great. It is almost suddenly that one finds oneself on the very edge of the stupendous cliffs that form the southern coast of Pembrokeshire—an edge that is almost mathematically a right angle, so sheer is the drop, so level is the plateau above. This stern, impregnable coast has the impressiveness that extreme simplicity on a large scale always has: it has the directness of Early Norman architecture. There is not an unnecessary line, so to speak, not the least attempt at ornament; and the effect is to take away one's breath. A few yards from the cliff are the great pillars known as the Stack Rocks, obviously separated from the mainland by the patient efforts of the sea and air—examples of the survival of the fittest. Their tall, gaunt outlines, and the sea-gulls that circle round them, add much to this strange scene; but our real reward for opening all those gates lies, not in the actual Stack Rocks themselves, but in the long curves of the coast-line, the massive

cliffs, the green, transparent sea that swirls about their base.

It is necessary to pass through Pembroke on the return journey, but we must leave it by the Carmarthen road, since to reach Haverfordwest we have to avoid all the long ramifications of Milford Haven. Soon we turn sharply to the left and enter the tiny village of Carew, where, close beside the roadway, stands one of the finest Celtic crosses in Wales, richly carved with one of those interlaced designs that the Welsh in very early days copied from the Irish. And not very far away is another of those splendid castles that were, to a Norman baron in Wales, among the bare necessities of life—the half Norman, half Tudor castle of Carew, or Caer-wy (the Fort on the Water), whence the pronunciation *Carey*. The east front, the entrance-gate and bastions are, I believe, the work of Gerard de Windsor, constable of Pembroke, and are plainly Edwardian in character; but the north front, with its famous mullioned windows, was added by Sir Rhys ap Thomas, the energetic supporter of Henry VII., whose

tomb we saw at Carmarthen; while the eastern side, with the great banqueting-hall and the lovely arch that leads to it, was contributed by Sir John Perrot, of Elizabethan days. This Sir John Perrot was one of the worst of the Irish Lords Deputy, but it was not on this account, very certainly, that he was suddenly called away from his building operations at Carew and bestowed in the Tower of London. The builders, delivered from his vigilant eye, did their work so perfunctorily that it is now in a more dilapidated condition than the sturdy defences of the Norman part of the castle.* But perhaps the old splendour of Carew is represented and recalled best of all by the beautiful rooms on the northern side, whose thresholds have been trodden by so many mailed feet, so many dainty silken shoes; for the hospitalities of Carew, at all events in the days of Sir Rhys ap Thomas, were carried out on a large scale. Henry of Richmond, not yet Henry of England, was entertained here on his way to Bosworth, and mounted the stairs to the room that

* Rev. S. Baring-Gould, "The Book of South Wales."

displays his arms upon a shield, only a little time before he mounted the steps of the throne. This last event was celebrated here in a magnificent pageant, a medley of feasts and tournaments and sermons, at which a thousand guests filled these weed-grown rooms with all the glitter and colour of an age that loved fine clothes. Sir Rhys himself figured on the occasion in "a fine gilt armour," and was attended by "two hundred tall men in blewe coats." The banqueting-hall on the east side was not then in existence, but there was nevertheless "a goodlie spaciouse roome richlie hanged with clothe of arras and tapestrie" in which "the bettermost sort" were entertained, a cross table being laid at one end for the King who was so many miles away. And yet, in spite of these rash distinctions among the guests, we are assured by the chronicler that "one thing is noteworthy, that for the space of five dayes among a thousand people there was not one quarrell, crosse word, or unkind looke that happened betweene them." It seems almost unnecessary that the bishop, before they parted,

should have "bestowed a sermon upon them."

Fifteen miles of a hilly road lie between Carew and Haverfordwest, a town that was important enough in Edward IV.'s day to be made a separate county. It was the chief town and stronghold of the Flemish colony, and the dominating position of the castle bears witness to its former usefulness; while its present mission as a gaol does nothing to detract from its grim appearance.

It was outside the embattled walls of Haverfordwest that Glyndwr first met his French allies, who had landed in Milford Haven from their hundred and forty ships. There were four or five thousand of them, very gay in their apparel, very rich in their accoutrements, and here before the hill of Haverfordwest they must have been an encouraging sight for a man whose luck was beginning to turn. But this stern castle withstood them, none the less, and though they burnt the town, they were obliged to retire. In the Civil War the Royalist garrison adopted a simple plan for saving

CAREW CASTLE.

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ST. DAVID'S CATHEDRAL AND RUINS OF THE BISHOP'S PALACE.

themselves from the discomforts of a siege. Hearing that the enemy was approaching, it seemed to them that the best way to avoid unpleasantness would be to leave the place vacant, which they did with all possible despatch.

There are a good many things that we may think of in this town: those "people brave and robust," as Giraldus calls the Flemings whom Henry I. established here; poor Richard II., who gave them their charter; Edward IV., who gave them a high sheriff; the sieges of centuries; the gay French army; but I, when I climb the steep streets of Haverfordwest, long most of all to know the spot on which the Crusades were preached to "a people well versed in commerce and woollen manufactories." "It appeared wonderful and miraculous," says the historian, with no consciousness that he is saying anything humorous, "that although the archdeacon addressed them both in the Latin and French tongues, those persons who understood neither of those languages were equally affected, and flocked in great numbers to the cross."

In the days when people journeyed to St. David's for the good of their souls it was considered that two pilgrimages to that shrine secured as many spiritual advantages as one pilgrimage to Rome. It seems hard that those who now approach St. David's by train should not derive some solid benefit of this kind, for the penance must really be very great, since Haverfordwest is the nearest station, and the road between the two places is known as "sixteen miles and seventeen hills." One passes these sad pilgrims, packed very closely in hired wagonettes behind still sadder horses, and one hopes that good may accrue to their souls, since surely this must be very bad for their bodies. Even bicyclists, our brethren of the road, must find these seventeen hills no easy task. The pilgrimage to St. David's is pre-eminently one for motorists.

The surface, on the whole, is good, and near the coast the scenery is fine. As the sea comes into sight on our left the rather dull, flat landscape to the right is enlivened by the curiously sudden crag on which stand the remains of Roche Castle, the birthplace

of Lucy Walters, the Duke of Monmouth's mother. After a time the road dips suddenly to the shore at Newgale, where the sands stretch for two miles between low headlands, and where long ago the sea once receded and showed the blackened stumps of a huge submerged forest. Between this and St. David's are "divers other little creekittes," says Leland, who has a passion for diminutives of an original kind; and of them all none is so charming as little Solva where the narrow creek runs up far intc the land, and a picturesque village climbs the hill, and the "fischerbotes" take refuge now as they did in the sixteenth century, and probably long before it.

A few minutes later appear the outskirts of the strangely squalid village that is the cathedral city of St. David's. The straggling, ugly street gives little promise of reward for our pilgrimage. Then suddenly we are at the edge of a hill, and we look down into the little dell that holds, perhaps, as much beauty and history and legend as any spot of its size in our country: the cathedral itself, very plain and built of a strange

purple stone; close beside it the ruins of St. Mary's College, founded by John of Gaunt and his wife; and beyond it the far greater ruins of Bishop Gower's very beautiful palace, with its great rose-window and the arcaded parapet that characterises the bishop's buildings. And to the seeing eye this little hollow contains far more than these mere stones: it is filled with countless memories of saints, and those who were anything but saints; it is crossed by a long procession of pilgrims; William I., who came to worship before St. David's shrine and in some sort apologise, as it were, for conquering the country—an apology that was rather premature; Edward I. and his faithful Eleanor, on the same errand, with more reason; William Rufus, with little interest in saints or shrines; Henry II., "habited like a pilgrim, and leaning on a staff," and met at the gate by a long and solemn procession. Of all these, Edward was the only one who worshipped in this very building, for it is the fourth that has stood on this spot and was raised just after Henry II.'s visit. Much restoration has given it the look of

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE, ST. DAVID'S.

ST. DAVID'S CATHEDRAL, INTERIOR.

a new building, as seen from the outside. Perhaps this is why, as one passes through the doorway, one is inclined to hold one's breath from sheer surprise; for St. David's Cathedral is "all glorious within," and there is nothing outside to prepare one for the Norman arches with their varied and rich ornament, for the splendour of the fifteenth-century roof, and of the rood-screen that Gower built and is buried in. For nearly two hundred years the nave was covered with whitewash, and indeed it has narrowly escaped worse things at the hands of evil men, for Bishop Barlow, of whom we heard at Lamphey, and heard nothing good, was minded to strip the roof of its lead, and was only stopped in this enterprise by Henry VIII. It was this same bishop who stripped the roof of Gower's palace and so led to its decay; and being, it seems, a veritable *esprit fort*, he not only was the first Protestant bishop who took advantage of the permission to marry, but he also took advantage of the dissolution of nunneries and married an abbess. Their five daughters, it is said, all married bishops. Barlow posi-

tively hated St. David's. Why, he asked, should money be spent on these ruinous buildings "to nourish clattering conventicles of barbarous rural persons"? Why not move the see to Carmarthen, since St. David's was "in such a desolate angle, and in so rare a frequented place, except of vagabond pilgrims"? The Saint himself was merely "an antique gargle of idolatry." In short, the lead of the roof was the only valuable thing here.

Now Henry VIII., as we well know, had little enough respect for the shrines of the saints or for the beauties of architecture, but he had a great respect for the bones of his own grandfather—and these lay here. So Barlow had to hold his hand; and we, as we stand in the presbytery of the cathedral beside Edmund Tudor's tomb, must remember all we owe to it. Nor is his the only notable tomb in this place; for here is the simple shrine before which so many kings, such countless pilgrims, have knelt, and there is the recumbent figure that some say is the Lord Rhys, the son of the brave Gwenllian, the greatest of the princes of South Wales, of whom it was said that "his prowesse

passed his manners, his wytte passed his prowesse, his fayre speeche passed his wytte, his good thewes passed his fayre speeche." Of the grave of Giraldus we must not be too sure, for though it is pointed out to us there has been much discussion with regard to it. Yet somewhere in this cathedral his dust lies we know.

Just beyond St. David's is the sea. And here too we must go, and, if possible, see the sun setting behind that western horizon where the hills of Holy Ireland are said to be sometimes visible. St. Patrick saw them, says the legend, as he sat on this shore, and vowed to give his life to the conversion of that land. He kept his vow; but William Rufus, who stood here with very different intentions, was less successful. As he looked across the sea to Ireland, he said, "I will summon hither all the ships of my realm, and with them make a bridge to attack that country." His words were reported to Murchard, Prince of Leinster, who, says the story, paused awhile, and answered, "Did the King add to this mighty threat, If God please?" and being informed that he had

made no mention of God in his speech, he replied, "I fear not his coming."

The legend that connects St. Patrick with this shore is extremely circumstantial, but whether it has the least foundation in truth I do not know. In the Rosy Valley, says the story, he built a college, where he taught both boys and girls, and trained missionaries who afterwards became Irish saints. One of the girls was Nôn, the mother of St. David, and it was near Porth Clais that that saint was born. And when he was old enough the boy too became a pupil of St. Patrick; and so, when his college days at Llantwit were over, and he was made "Archbishop of Legions," because "his life was a perfect example of that goodness which by his doctrine he taught," he moved the see from Caerleon to Menevia for love of his master St. Patrick. In this way was fulfilled the prophesy of Merlin: "Menevia shall put on the pall of the City of Legions"; and from that time forward Menevia has been called after its first and most famous bishop, St. David.

From this strange, remote land of dreams and legends and memories of early saints the

transition to the world of modern progress is rather sudden; for only fifteen miles lie between the shrine of St. David and the new turbine steamers of Fishguard. We shall do well to choose the upper road, which runs for the most part through a bare, inhospitable land that is far more suggestive of the remoteness of the village-city than the most dramatic mountain pass could be. Here and there we have a fine glimpse of the coast, and there is a sudden softening in the scenery as we draw near Goodwick. Here, at one side of the pretty bay of Fishguard, are all the evidences of the new route to Ireland—the station, the hotel, and the steamers at the quay, while across the bay, beyond the long beach, the upper town of Fishguard appears above the headland. Here, at Fishguard, the French landed in 1797. Then, as they looked at those heights above the town, their hearts misgave them, for the hills were ominously streaked and patched with scarlet. It became plain to them that a very large force—a far larger force than they were prepared to meet—was waiting to descend upon them. And so it happened

that their general, without loss of time, repaired to the Royal Oak Inn, where he signed his capitulation to Lord Cawdor. I do not know when, if ever, he found out that the masses of scarlet figures on the hills were not soldiers, but the enterprising matrons and maids of all the county round, who had come out in the red cloaks that were then part of the national dress, to see what was going forward.

The lower town of Fishguard lies in a cleft between two steep hills, and its pretty little harbour has all the picturesqueness that quays and boats and rippling green water can give. The further hill of the two, which we must climb, is of a most amazing gradient—computed in contour-books as averaging 1 in 7, but certainly 1 in 5 in places. From the high ground to which it leads us, lying between Fishguard and Newport, there are glimpses from time to time of fine coast scenery, and beyond Newport the road lies through very pretty country, under the conspicuous peak of Carningly. In the churchyard at Nevern there is a beautiful Celtic cross, the cross of St. Brynach, an Irish con-

temporary of St. David. From this point the road gradually rises to a considerable height, and then runs down a long hill to Cardigan.

Cardigan, once "the lock and key of all Wales," gives us no hint of its former greatness. It appears an uninteresting little town till one realises that it is the Aberteifi whose castle was taken and retaken, burnt, and shattered, and built again, through all the stormiest years of Welsh history; captured by the men of the north from the men of the south; defended by both against the Anglo-Normans; attacked by the Flemings; at one time the court of Llewelyn, the greatest of the northern princes; and at another the court of Lord Rhys, the greatest of the southern princes. Here lived Griffith, the father of Rhys, "the light and the strength and the gentleness of the men of the south," whose brave wife, Gwenllian, was killed by Maurice de Londres; and here he and Gwenllian's brother, the great Owen Gwynedd, avenged her, when Cardigan bridge broke under the retreating Normans, and "the salt green wave of Teivy was clogged" with the bodies of the slain. And here the

Lord Rhys held his famous revels, which included one of those mediæval Tournaments of Song with which Wagner has made us so familiar. The invitations were sent out in good time—a year and a day before the event—and many hundreds of English and Normans were bidden from "all Britain, Ireland, and the islands adjacent." The historian goes on to tell us how "Rhys caused all the bards or poets throughout all Wales to come thither; and for a better diversion to the company he provided chairs to be set in the hall, in which the bards being seated, they were to answer each other in rhyme, and those that acquitted themselves most handsomely and overcame the rest, were promised great rewards and rich presents." And the men of Gwynedd won the prize for poetry, but the men of the south were victorious in music.

Such in the old days was Cardigan, where the tourist may pause for a mid-day chop or buy a picture postcard.

Two miles above Cardigan, on a crag beside the Teify, are the ruined towers of Cilgerran, which have been very little concerned with

history, though they have stood here since the days of Henry I. Their striking position above the wooded banks of the river, however, will repay us for a detour of a mile or two, and we can rejoin the main road at the beautiful bridge of Llechryd. Here, where the prevailing note of the landscape is peace, the gentle Teify, whose purling waters have so often run red, was once actually dammed—as on another occasion at Cardigan—by the bodies of the slain, when the princes of the south met the invading princes of Powys and overthrew them.

From Llechryd we follow the Teify past Newcastle Emlyn; and thence, if we like, we may cross the moors to Lampeter; or, better still, we may go straight on through the Henllan woods to Llandyssil, a lovely little place where fishermen delight to dwell, and where in consequence there is a really charming little hotel. And if, as may well happen, there is no room for us there, we can after all go on our way to Lampeter, for there also there is quite a nice hotel, though of course it lacks the charm of the country garden and the rushing Teify. The moorland road between

Llandyssil and Lampeter is in its way unique, for on both sides of it the hills are covered with a thick, short growth of gorse, a carpet of gold spread almost smoothly for miles.

At Lampeter there is nothing to detain us but the important business of consulting maps. For here is the parting of the ways. If our object is merely to reach the English border, our best way perhaps is to aim at Builth. To do this we must strike across the hills through lovely scenery; past Pumpsaint, where George Borrow awoke to hear the murmuring of the Cothi; through Llandovery, where we have been before on the way to Carmarthen; and thence over a really fine pass to Llanwrtyd Wells. If, on the other hand, we are aiming at North Wales our obvious course is to strike across to Aberaeron, and thence follow the coast to Aberystwith and Barmouth. And if—and this is the course I strongly recommend—we intend to complete the circle, and end our little tour by running down the Wye Valley, then too we should make for Aberystwith, and, turning thence eastward, join the infant Wye on the slopes of Plynlimmon.

KILGERRAN CASTLE, NEAR CARDIGAN.

UNIV. OF MICH.

THE WYE NEAR ITS SOURCE.

THE VALLEY OF THE WYE

THE VALLEY OF THE WYE

THOSE who have stout hearts and stout boots may, I believe, discover the actual source of the Wye among the rushes of Plynlimmon. Five miles of hard walking over rather dull downs will procure them the satisfaction of seeing the first gleams of the thin silver thread that is destined to grow into the most beautiful river of England. Most of us, however, will be content to meet the Wye for the first time when it is five miles old, so to speak, at the point where it touches the high-road from Aberystwith to Newtown. Even here it is a tiny stream, rushing lightheartedly down the hill over the rocks, unsobered as yet by the dignified reflections of Hereford and Tintern and Chepstow Castle.

These slopes of Plynlimmon are not particularly inspiring, except when regarded as

the cradle of the Wye, and of that greater river whose tributary she is, the Severn. It is true that the standard of Wales, with its red dragon, once floated victoriously on the side of this hill, and the short grass has been dyed with the blood of the Flemings, who mustered here to chastise that stout rebel, Owen Glyndwr, and were thoroughly chastised by him instead. But in themselves the heights of Plynlimmon are a little uninteresting. Short grass and rushes are all that grow upon them, and though their rounded outlines have a dignity of their own, the lack of colour makes them rather desolate. It is not till the Wye has passed Llangurig that it begins to earn its fame.

Curiously enough, the Wye's fame seems to depend mainly on its lower reaches. Nine people out of ten regard it as rising, so to speak, in Hereford; the Upper Wye is unknown to them and considered of no account. Yet to those who know it the Upper Wye, with its rugged hills and its wealth of colours, has a stronger charm even than the wooded loveliness of Symond's Yat or of Tintern.

At Llangurig—which is a wind-swept village with a nice little inn and a reputation for good fishing—the river and the road that follows it turn sharply to the right, and begin to descend by a very gentle gradient towards Rhayader. The landscape changes gradually. The hills lose their bleak desolation only to become cultivated and commonplace: then the fields yield to moorlands and the rounded curves to bold and jagged rocks; and at last, near the spot where the river Marteg adds its waters to the Wye and the railway joins the road, the great hills rise on each side so precipitously that the way lies almost through a defile. The hilltops are bare and grey, but by the banks of the river is a belt of trees; and as the valley widens the slopes are no longer bare but are glorious in purple and gold, in heather and gorse. And where the flaming sides of the Elan Valley converge with the valley of the Wye stands the tiny town of Rhayader.

This is, I think, the gem of the Wye. It is well, therefore, if possible, to stay here for a day or two; and fortunately there is a nice little hotel to stay in. There are hills near

and far, and on every hill are all the colours of the rainbow, and with the passing of every cloud the colours move and change. Close at hand are slopes of bracken topped by rugged crags; far away the hills of the Elan Valley are blue and amethyst. The river rushes through the town, giving to it its name of Rhayader Gwy, the Falls of the Wye, though the falls are not what they once were, I believe, before the bridge was built. Of course there is a castle-mound, for no Welsh town of a respectable age is complete without one. The castle itself has disappeared. The days of its life, indeed, appear to have been few and evil. It was built by "the Lord Rhys," the mightiest of all the princes of the south, but so strenuous was the life of his day that he was obliged to rebuild it a few years later. Afterwards he was for a short time imprisoned by his own sons, and it was while he was in this undignified position that his castle of Rhayader was seized by his enemies. But these dim memories have lately been eclipsed. Those who visit Rhayader to-day think little of the valorous and potent prince of ancient Wales;

they think almost exclusively of the Birmingham Waterworks. We may forgive them for this, for the Birmingham Waterworks are more romantic than one would expect—romantic not merely as all great engineering works must be, with the romance of enterprise and achievement, but also romantically beautiful. One may drive for miles beside the lakes that wind into the heart of the mountains, and would have so natural an air if it were not for their mighty dams of Caban, and Pen-y-Garreg, and Craig Goch. It is a drive worth taking, for the road is good, the mountains tower above it with real grandeur, and the waters have pathos as well as beauty. The legend of buried houses and churches is common to many lakes; but in the case of the lakes of Cwm Elan it is no legend, but a fact, that their waters flow over the ground where generations of men have lived and worked, have ploughed their fields and said their prayers. The affairs of most of them are forgotten as completely as their houses are buried, but there is one memory here that no waters can hide—whether of Cwm Elan or of the

chilly Serpentine or of the blue Mediterranean —the memory of Percy and Harriet Shelley. They lived here once, young and happy, and would have thought it a wild prophecy indeed if it had been foretold to them that not only they themselves, but even their quiet homestead among the green fields, would be destroyed by water.

From Rhayader to Newbridge the road still closely follows the river, which, as we watch it mile by mile, gradually becomes wider and calmer. For the first few miles the banks are wild enough, and very beautiful; then suddenly the river is hidden from us by the deep shades and countless stems of Doldowlod Woods, where James Watt once lived; and by the time we dart out into the sunlight again we are nearing Newbridge. On this road there is nothing to limit our speed except the law, for from end to end of the Wye the surface is good, and there are no hills that deserve the name. At Newbridge we leave the river for a few miles, but join it again near Builth, and cross it to enter that town.

Builth is unattractive. It professes to be

a Spa, but I never heard of any one who drank the waters; and it is hardly likely to become popular, since all the charms of Llanwrtyd Wells are but thirteen miles away on the one side, and all the fashion of Llandrindod only seven miles away on the other Llanwrtyd is a delightful little place, with a good hotel and lovely surroundings, unspoilt as yet by popularity; while Llandrindod, as every one knows, is beloved by so many that it is no longer very lovable. Builth has little to offer in rivalry of these, and indeed makes small show of hospitality, maintaining in this matter the character it earned long ago, when it refused to admit its fugitive prince, the last Llewelyn. It is only a little way from here to the dell whither he struggled through the snow from this his treacherous town, only to find fresh treachery, and to die through its means. His dust lies, they say, at the spot called Cefn-y-Bedd, or the Bank of the Grave; and here in quite recent times a monument of stone has been set up. It stands close to the wayside on the road from Builth to Llanwrtyd.

This, however, is not our road, which

follows the Wye very closely for a time; through Erwood, where from the top of a slight rise we have a wide and beautiful view; past Llyswen and the "Three Cocks," one of the most famous of fishing inns, and through Glasbury to Hay. We are now in a broad and fertile valley; the hills are wooded; the river is growing slow and stately in its demeanour. The whole aspect of the country has changed, for at Hay we shall leave all the wildness of Wales behind us, and shall enter the quiet, homely county of Hereford.

"I cam *in crepusculo* to the Hay," says Leland, and he chose his time wisely.

Hay, or La Haie, as it was originally called, was once the meeting-ground of all those turbulent mediæval passions that flourished so exceedingly on the border. For this reason it is full of ghosts. From this, the Welsh side, it has rather an undistinguished air, but when first seen by twilight from the English side, with the Black Mountains lowering behind it, and the remains of its grim castle dominating it, little Hay seizes the imagination. For those who approach

it thus *in crepusculo*, like Leland, the past for ever lives in its commonplace streets more insistently than the present; lives above all in its castle—"the which sumetime hath bene right stately"—the castle with the long, picturesque flight of steps, and the longer and still more picturesque history. Through that great doorway many feet have passed that never came out, for those that entered the castle of Hay did it at their peril. The greater part of the building as it now stands is of Tudor date, but the entrance has by some means survived since King John's time, and this in spite of difficulties: for the place was plundered during the Border Wars, destroyed by the Welsh themselves in self-defence, rebuilt by Henry III., captured by Llewelyn, retaken by Prince Edward, captured once more by Llewelyn's grandson, and finally suffered the general fate of Welsh castles. "Now being almost totally decay'd," says Camden, "it complains of the outrages of that profligate Rebel, Owen Glyn Dowrdwy, who in his March through these Countries consumed it with fire."

This last disaster may account for the

entirely modern appearance of the houses; but there is nothing, no slate roof, no shop-window full of cheap blouses, that can make one forget the haunting presence of those that walk unseen in Hay—the undying ghosts of a hundred battles, murders, and sudden deaths.

Soon after leaving Hay we pass the remains of Clifford Castle. Here was born Jane de Clifford, destined to be so fair that men would call her the Rose of the World; and here no doubt she played her childish games on the banks of the Wye, with no disturbing visions of that harder game which she was to play later on and finally to lose. The story of the avenging poison-cup is untrue, we are told: it was in the nunnery of Godstow that Fair Rosamund died, and was buried beneath the cruellest epitaph, surely, that was ever graven on a tomb.

Two miles beyond Clifford is the toll-bridge of Whitney, and this we cross with a pretty view of the river on each side of us. Our way lies through Letton, past the turn to Monnington—which claims to be the burial-place of Owen Glyndwr—and through Bridge

CONFLUENCE OF THE WYE AND THE MARTEG NEAR RHAYADER.

UNIV OF

HEREFORD.

Sollars to Hereford. The landscape all the way is characteristic of the country: a scene of quiet fields and gentle river, of thatched cottages and gay gardens. It is not exciting, but it is extremely pleasant. Characteristic as it is, however, it does not represent Herefordshire at its best. The hills above Ledbury, the hop-gardens round Leominster, the woods and the wide views near Richard's Castle, are all more distinctive and more beautiful than this part of the Wye Valley. Indeed, if we were not at this moment pledged to follow the Wye we should do well to drive from Hay to Hereford by way of the Golden Valley, though the journey is considerably longer and the road by no means so good. This valley was originally named by the British, from the river that runs through it, the Valley of the Dore, or of the Water, for *water* is in Welsh *dwr*. The Normans, jumping to conclusions, translated this into *Val d'Or*, and so it became the Golden Valley; "which name," says Camden, "It may well be thought to deserve, for its golden, rich, and pleasant fertility."

But it is improbable that either the fertility

of the "Gilden Vale" or the remains of Abbeydore Monastery will tempt a motorist to leave the splendid road that will lead him into Hereford by Letton, and Bridge Sollars, and the White Cross that was set up in the fourteenth century when the plague was raging in Hereford, to mark the spot where the infection ceased, and where, in consequence, it was safe to hold a market. Here, on the left, lies the suburb of Widemarsh and beyond it the Racecourse, where the promising youth who was afterwards Edward I. showed at an early age that genius for extremely practical jokes that he used at the expense of the Welsh later on. He was the prisoner of Simon de Montfort on this occasion, and was taking a ride with a certain number of attendants. He guilelessly suggested that his guards should ride races among themselves, while he amused himself by looking on; then, when their horses were tired, he upon his fresh one galloped off to Dinmore Hill, where the Mortimers of Wigmore were waiting for him. This incident took place in Widemarsh; and in Widemarsh too is a relic that is worth seeking out before

we drive into the heart of the town—the preaching-cross of the Dominicans, which, with the ruins of a thirteenth-century monastery, stands among the cabbages of the Coningsby Hospital. The latter is an Elizabethan foundation, and with the red coats of its pensioners is in itself a picturesque object in a town that is not very rich in visible memorials of its great history. We may look in vain for the castle that was, according to Leland, the largest and strongest in all England; the castle that was repaired by King Harold and was once so splendid with its ten wall-towers and great keep; where Ranulph of Normandy stayed, and Tostig, and King John, where John of Gaunt was governor, were Simon de Montfort imprisoned Prince Edward after the Battle of Lewes, where Isabella proclaimed her son Edward III. Protector of England, and where Owen Tudor was a prisoner. As it suffered no less than three sieges during the Civil War, and when they were over its remains were sold for £85, we need not be surprised that the castle is now represented by a public garden, where the youthful

citizens of Hereford may play leap-frog over the spot where kings have feasted and made history. And not only has the castle disappeared, but even of the old houses there are very few remaining, as may be judged by the name of the fine one that stands in the principal street of the town. In Chester, Worcester, or Shrewsbury, "The Old House" would not be a very distinguishing name!

The chief point of interest in Hereford is, of course, the Cathedral, with its long and somewhat confusing history. An endless number of people have had a hand in the building of it, apparently, from the days when Offa of Mercia enriched the shrine of his murdered guest, Ethelbert of East Anglia, till the quite recent and rather unfortunate day when the west front was finished. The consequence of this diversity of builders is that Hereford Cathedral, with its austere Norman south transept, its Early English Lady-Chapel, its Decorated south choir-transept, and its Perpendicular cloister, is a complete Guide of Architecture.

It was as the shrine of St. Ethelbert that it first became important. There is a good deal

THE PREACHING CROSS, HEREFORD.

ROSS FROM WILTON.

of disagreement on the subject of Ethelbert's death. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, for instance, says *tout court* that in 792 Offa commanded the head of King Ethelbert to be cut off; whereas Matthew of Westminster gives quite a different version of the affair, completely exonerating Offa, "that most noble and most illustrious and most high-born king." It was Offa's queen, Quendritha, he says, who caused a peculiarly comfortable armchair to be placed in the bedroom of her visitor the King of East Anglia, and beneath it "a deep hole to be dug"—with very unpleasant consequences for the visitor. When the horrified Offa heard of Ethelbert's fate he shut himself up and refused food. "But," adds Matthew, "although he was quite innocent of all participation in the King's death, he nevertheless sent a powerful expedition and annexed the Kingdom of the East Angles to his own dominions."

The murdered guest, whoever his murderer, was first buried at the spot still called St. Ethelbert's Well, and afterwards in Hereford Cathedral, to its great enrichment.

There are several roads from Hereford to

Ross, none of which follow the river closely. The most commonly used—being the least hilly—is by Bridstow and Much Birch. Between this road and the Wye are still to be seen traces of the College of Llanfrother, founded by Dubritius, that great Archbishop of Caerleon who preached so movingly at King Arthur's coronation and then resigned his see to the still greater St. David. On the other side of the Wye is a shorter, but after the first five or six miles a more hilly route, with some fine backward views and some glimpses of the river. The surface of this road is all that can be desired, and the hills are by no means formidable; but as one approaches Ross the country is rather uninteresting.

Ross itself may be regarded as a monument to one John Kyrle.

"Rise, honest muse, and sing the Man of Ross! [cries Pope]
Whose causeway paves the vale with shady rows?
Whose seats the weary traveller repose?
Who taught that heaven-directed spire to rise?
'The *Man of Ross*,' each lisping babe replies."

The lisping babe, however, is making a mis-

take, for the Man of Ross only taught the spire to rise forty-seven feet; and, moreover, it has been destroyed by lightning and rebuilt since his day (which was a very long day, lasting from 1637 to 1724). "A small exaggeration you must allow me as a poet," said Pope. But the fame of John Kyrle does not depend upon the spire alone, for he did much to improve the town, and did it, too, on a very small income. "He was a very humble, good-natured man . . . of little or no literature," an eighteenth-century diarist says of him. "His estate was £500 per ann., and no more, with which he did wonders." It was not, however, by means of this modest estate alone that he won his lasting fame as a philanthropist, but also by untiring energy and skill in the art of beggary, and the judicious use of other men's money. In the case of the church bell it was his own money that he used, and his own silver goblet also. While the bell was in process of casting he drank to Church and King, and then flung the goblet into the molten metal—that after serving for the sacred toast it might be for ever consecrated to sacred uses. This incident

adds a touch of the picturesque to the sterling qualities of the benevolent old gentleman to whom Ross owes its public walks, and the *Prospect* that quaint Gilpin of the eighteenth century described as "an amusing view." Ross repays him by keeping his name green. It also—not entirely without difficulty—keeps green the two elm-suckers that long ago forced their way beneath the wall of the church and rose (being elms of Ross) in the pew of John Kyrle. They have been dead for some time, but they are still draped carefully with foliage to keep up the illusion. The church itself is fairly old, and has some interesting monuments, including an ugly one tardily raised to the memory of the Man of Ross.

In the town the most cherished relics are, of course, Kyrle's house and the carved monogram he is supposed to have placed on the outer wall of the Market Hall. The letters "F.C." are interlaced with a heart, and are said to represent the words, "*Faithful to Charles in heart*," for Kyrle was devoted to the Stuarts. Charles I. himself slept once in this town, and other kings have visited it,

but none has distinguished himself here save George IV. The Mayor of Ross sallied forth to meet him, as mayors use, wreathed in smiles and primed with speeches. By way of response to all this loyalty and eloquence, however, "the first gentleman in Europe" merely pulled down the blinds of the carriage! History does not record the mayor's next proceeding. The position strikes one as difficult.

Close to Ross and on our way to Monmouth is Wilton, which is reached by a beautiful and ancient bridge of six arches, whence there is a good view of Ross, clustered prettily on its hill and surmounted by its heaven-directed spire. Part of this bridge was broken down during the Civil War to prevent Cromwell's army from reaching Hereford. The castle, too, fell into the hands of the Royalists, though its owner had carefully refrained from supporting either side, with the result that he offended both. The ruins now enclose a private garden and are fairly picturesque though they hardly compensate for an interrupted run. Within these walls, of which so very little is left, the poet Spenser was once

entertained in the days of the Greys. Later on the castle was owned by the family of Brydges, one of whom, when he was Deputy-Lieutenant of the Tower, was the means, either deliberately or from mere procrastination, of securing for England one of the most glorious reigns in her history. The warrant for the execution of Princess Elizabeth reached the Tower, but Charles Brydges delayed to carry it out. While he was waiting Queen Mary died.

From Wilton to Monmouth the scenery grows in beauty. At Goodrich Cross we should turn sharply to the left to visit the castle, and this is a matter that will take some time. For in the first place the castle is at some distance from the road, and in the second place there is much to see, and much, too, to hear. Yet there is little history connected with Goodrich, considering its age and dignity, and the great names of Pembroke and Talbot that are bound up with it. Its name, apparently is a corruption of *Godric*, who built a fort here before the Conquest, though the oldest part of the present ruin is said to date from the twelfth century. In

the Civil War it endured two sieges, and it was after the second one, which lasted for five months, that the Parliament dismantled it. Except on this one dramatic occasion, Goodrich figured little in public life. It is the antiquary rather than the historian who will find it of absorbing interest, for the arches and Norman ornaments of the keep date from Stephen's reign, and many styles of architecture are represented in the various galleries, sallyports, and towers, which have been gradually added by the successive owners of the castle. Greatest of these was Talbot, first Earl of Shrewsbury and hero of forty fights, "a valiant man, of an invincible, unconquered spirit." He is said to have added a room to the keep, whence he must often have seen, as we may see, the Malvern Hills and the Welsh mountains in the distance, with Symond's Yat and the Kymin nearer at hand.

Below Goodrich is Huntsham Ferry, which Henry IV. was in the act of crossing when he heard of the birth of his son, afterwards Henry V. So great was his excitement on this occasion that he impulsively presented

the ferry and its profits to the ferryman, whose heirs held this possession for generations.

About three miles from Goodrich we have to climb a short hill with a gradient of 1 in 10; the steepest, I think, on this Wye Valley road. From the top of it we run down on an easy slope past the wall of Wyaston Leys and through the woods behind the Little Doward, with a beautiful view—unfortunately visible only in glimpses—of the winding river as it bends away towards Symond's Yat. At the foot of the hill we enter Monmouth.

Now Monmouth, or some spot quite near it, is without doubt the best motoring centre on the Wye. The town itself is not so pleasant to stay in as Ross or Tintern, where there are hotels in pretty positions with nice gardens; but to the motorist this is less important than to others, since he will probably spend the day on the road. The important thing is to have a variety of interesting roads upon which to spend it. From Monmouth, one may drive up the Wye to Goodrich, Hereford, and Hay; or down

the Wye to Tintern and Chepstow; or through the Forest of Dean on the further side of the river; or to Raglan, eight miles away, and on to Abergavenny; or past Abergavenny and the Holy Mountain into the wild Vale of Ewyas to far Llanthony.

"I'll tell you, there is goot men porn at Monmouth," says Fluellen, thinking of his king; and it is of Harry of Monmouth that we too think as we wake the echoes of his birthplace with our horn—those echoes that have so often answered to the "tucket" of John of Gaunt and of many another. Some say that it was John of Gaunt who built the castle in which his grandson was born, but whether this be the case or not there was a castle on this spot long before his day, though little seems to be known of it. The probability is that John of Gaunt improved and repaired the castle that was already there. The existing building has had an unusually chequered career even for a castle, having been in turn a palace, a pig-stye, an assize court, and a barrack. Even in James I.'s time it was said "that his Majestie hath one ancient castell, called Monmouth Castell

. . . which is nowe and hath been for a long time ruinous and in decaye, but by whom it hath byn decayed wee knowe not, nor to what value, in regarde it was before our rememberment." "Harry's Window," but little else, survives as a shrine to the king whose name is still "a name to conjure with." His statue stands on the town-hall, but the bells of St. Mary's are the best memorial of Prince Hal, though their story is more characteristic of the rollicking schoolboy of Shakespeare than of the wise and soldierly monarch of history. Time was when these bells rang out over the town of Calais. They were doing so when Harry of Monmouth heard them first, and were, in point of fact, celebrating his departure from the shores of France with so much joyousness that the demonstration seemed to him to be carried too far. He vowed that they should ring no more insolent peals in Calais, and forthwith ordered them to be taken down and carried to his native town.

His town has other memories than his, and even other famous windows than "Harry's." There is a fine oriel window, belonging now

to a school, but carefully preserved in honour of a twelfth-century archdeacon, who was none other than that Geoffrey of Monmouth whom Camden describes as "an Author well skill'd in Antiquities, but, as it seems, not of entire credit." I fear there is little to be said in defence of Geoffrey's credit as a historian, and there are those who say that his window is no more authentic than his writings.

Monmouth, like Hereford, is not rich in relics. Of its defences, its walls and its four gates, there is left only one gate on the Monnow Bridge, but of this the foundations are so old that there is no record of their origin. The form of the gateway itself has been slightly altered from time to time to suit increasing traffic, but its picturesqueness is uninjured. Through its arch we must pass on our way to Raglan and Abergavenny and Llanthony.

It is possible, of course, to see all these places on the same day, but it is not desirable. At Raglan one should have a leisured mind, undisturbed by thoughts of space or time or possible punctures. There are seats

on its green terraces where one might sit happily all day under the shadow of the Yellow Tower of Gwent, seeing, not only the straight, stern lines of the great citadel rising from the moat, and the beautiful windows beyond, and the machicolated towers that flank the entrance, but also, as clearly as these, the pageantry and doughty deeds of long-dead but unforgotten Somersets. Some of them lost their heads in defence of the Rose of York, and some lost theirs for the Rose of Lancaster, and one, the most famous of all, lost the home of his fathers in the cause of the thankless Stuarts. Charles I. himself—for whose sake all this splendour of banqueting-halls and state-rooms and strong defences was made a ruin—has stood upon this terrace and looked up at the great keep to which he was so fatal, has feasted in the Elizabethan Hall, has ridden between the entrance-towers in state, and has come to them for safety as a fugitive. It was after the Battle of Naseby that he fled for protection to the house whose hospitalities he knew so well, and whose owner, the first Marquis of

MONNOW BRIDGE, MONMOUTH.

UNIV. OF MICH.

RAGLAN CASTLE, ENTRANCE TOWER.

Worcester, had raised an army of two thousand men to fight for the King. Somewhere, in some dark corner within those walls that were then so stately, Lord Worcester met his ruined King by stealth, and being aged and infirm was obliged to call for help before he could kneel, as it behoved him, before the fugitive. "Sire," said the old man weeping, "I have not a thought in my heart that tends not to the service of my God and you;" and he put three hundred pounds into the royal hand that took so much and gave so little. It closed upon this gift, as it closed a few days later upon the waistcoat that the Vicar of Goodrich, Dean Swift's grandfather, had lined with Broad Pieces. There was one occasion, it is true, when Charles feared his entertainment might be too costly to Lord Worcester, and suggested pleasantly that supplies should be wrung from the neighbouring peasants. But Worcester was prouder than the King, "My castle would not stand long," he said, "if it leaned upon the country."

Even as matters were, his castle did not

stand long. It held for the King till the last barrel of powder was opened; but the sad day came when the gallant old man of eighty-five passed for the last time through his own great gateway, between those war-like towers that had fought their last fight. He marched out to the sound of music and with all the honours of war, but his heart was broken, and after a short imprisonment in the custody of Black Rod, he died. "When I spoke with the man," he said of his guardian, "I found him a very civil gentleman, but I saw no black rod."

With this splendid old warrior the glory of Raglan departed. Fairfax so dealt with it that neither blood nor wine should ever be spilt within its walls again; and the work begun by him was finished by private enterprise. It is said that twenty-three staircases have been stolen from the ruins of Raglan.

About eight miles beyond Raglan is Abergavenny, lying peacefully—forgetful of its lurid past—in the shadow of the Holy Mountain. There is about Abergavenny now a peculiar serenity that is only equalled by the darkness of its history. Not very

much is left of the Castle, of which Giraldus Cambrensis, the historian, said that "it was more dishonoured by treachery than any other in Wales"; and what there is of it is dishonoured now by swing-boats and asphalt lawn-tennis courts. If these attractions appeal to us we may enter the walls by paying twopence; but in the twelfth century the Seisyllts—the ancestors of the Cecils—found that entering Abergavenny Castle cost them more than this. One of them, in the absence of the Norman lord of the place, was having a friendly chat one day with the constable. There was a part of the wall that was in some way weaker than the rest, and Seisyllt, pointing laughingly to this spot, said in the manner of one who jests, "We shall come in there to-night." The constable took the precaution of keeping guard till daylight, then went to sleep. A few hours later he and his wife were prisoners and the castle was captured and burnt.

It was after this, I believe, when the castle had been rebuilt, that the villain, William de Braose, invited the princes of South Wales to a banquet in these halls, picked a quarrel

with them at his own table, and had them massacred before his eyes. He then solemnly thanked God for the fortunate issue of the affair, and more especially for the lands of the dead Seisyllts. For this William de Braose, traitor, murderer, and robber, never forgot to be pious. "He always placed the name of the Lord before his sentences," says Giraldus; and his letters "were loaded, or rather honoured, with words expressive of the divine indulgence, to a degree not only tiresome to his scribe, but even to his auditors; for as a reward to each of his scribes for concluding his letters with the words 'by divine assistance' he gave annually a piece of gold." In the matter of the murdered Seisyllts, however, his thanksgiving was premature, for there were Seisyllts still alive who fell upon Abergavenny Castle and demolished it.

It raised its head again and took an active part in larger wars; but it adds little nowadays to the attraction of Abergavenny, whose charms are altogether those of peacefulness and depend on the quiet Usk, and the hills that grow so purple against the evening sky.

THE MOAT, RAGLAN CASTLE.

UNIV OF MICH

LLANTHONY PRIORY.

To reach Llanthony we must drive on into the heart of those hills, with the Skirrid Fawr, or Holy Mountain, on the right and the Sugar Loaf on the left; then, at Llanfihangel Crucorney, turn sharply to the left down a short but very steep hill, and so enter the Vale of Ewyas. Soon after passing Cwmyoy the road grows very narrow and hilly. At Llanthony we can take our car into the cloister-garth, for it is now the courtyard of an inn.

Long ago, when Rufus was king, a horseman drew rein here and looked about him. On every side he saw the grand, clear outline of the hills, and the shadows of the clouds sweeping across the fern and heather, and the dark masses of the woods. Below him the little Honddu glittered among the trees, and far away at the head of the valley the heights of the Black Mountains rose between him and the world. And then and there he vowed that they should rise between him and the world while he lived, and should guard his grave when he was dead. We can see the same hills at this moment rising blue and misty behind the

ruined towers of his Priory of Llanthony; and only a few yards away, among the grass and nettles, we can see the spot where William de Lacy, soldier and monk, was buried under the High Altar.

William de Lacy was not the first to whom this valley appealed as being "truly fitted for contemplation, a happy and delightful spot"; for long before his day this very place to which he had wandered by chance had been made sacred by the prayers of the greatest of all Welsh saints, St. David. We may say our prayers on the self-same spot to-day, for over there, just beyond the cloister-garth, where St. David had long before made himself a hermitage, de Lacy built a tiny chapel. For many centuries the richly endowed Priory has been deserted, roofless, desecrated; its very arches are fringed with weeds, and fowls peck at its grass-grown altar steps; but over there in that plain little grey stone building prayers are still rising Sunday by Sunday from the spot where St. David knelt alone.

Here in Llandewi Nanthodeni, or the Church of St. David beside the river

Honddu, William de Lacy "laid aside his belt and girded himself with a rope; instead of fine linen he covered himself with haircloth, and instead of his soldier's robe he loaded himself with weighty iron." His solitude did not last long. In those roystering days the sudden piety of a soldier of noble birth was not likely to pass unnoticed, and Matilda, Henry I.'s Queen, whom William of Malmesbury describes as singularly holy and by no means despicable in point of beauty, came to visit the hermit in his hill-bound cell, and playfully dropped a large purse of gold into the folds of his coarse garments. His fame grew. Soon there were many who desired to share his seclusion, and still more who, while not quite seeing their way to the forsaking of this world, were anxious to show their interest in the next. The former gave their lives and the latter their money, and so Llanthony Priory rose in all its grace and simplicity, the quiet lines of its architecture in perfect harmony with those of the great hills that encircled it. "The whole treasure of the

King and his kingdom," said Henry I.'s Prime Minister, "would not be sufficient to build such a cloister." The Court was rather scandalised by this bold statement, till the Prime Minister explained that "he alluded to the cloister of mountains by which this church is on every side surrounded."

Giraldus describes the place as he saw it in the twelfth century. "A situation truly calculated for religion," he says, "and more adapted to canonical discipline than all the monasteries of the British Isles. . . . Here the monks, sitting in their cloisters enjoying the fresh air, when they happen to look up towards the horizon, behold the tops of the mountains as it were touching the heavens, and herds of wild deer feeding on their summits." It is probable that when the Augustinians of Llanthony looked up towards the horizon it was not altogether for the pleasure of seeing the wild deer. They had other reasons for taking an interest in the hills, which too often were swarming with the hostile Welsh. It was not long, indeed, before the brethren's

INTERIOR OF LLANTHONY PRIORY, SHOWING THE EAST END.

TINTERN ABBEY.

terror of the Welsh grew stronger than their love of isolation, and the greater number of them fled to Gloucester, where in a new Priory of Llanthony their meditations were undisturbed.

The beautiful valley, with its great, bare hilltops and mysterious woods, its loneliness and calm, its memories of saintly men, attracted a poet of the last century so strongly that he, like William de Lacy, determined to stay here. Like de Lacy's monks, however, Walter Savage Landor could not get on with his neighbours, and after buying the ruins of the Priory and building himself half a house he quarrelled so thoroughly with all the countryside that he thought he would have more peace elsewhere. He lived in the rooms that now form an inn, in the Prior's Lodge, and here Southey stayed with him.

This run from Monmouth to Llanthony is about twenty-five miles in length. If we are not wedded to the high-road we may return to Monmouth by another route—composed almost entirely of byways and in some cases very hilly ones—and so visit

Grosmont and Skenfrith Castles. The red towers of Grosmont stand, as the name implies, on a hill that is not climbed without an effort, and the ruin overlooks a village that was once a town, and indeed is technically a town still. It still possesses a charter, I believe, and a Mayor's staff; but in the matter of size and prosperity it has been no more than a village since the day when Henry V., then Prince of Wales, wrote to his "most redoubted and most sovereign lord and father" in his "most humble manner" to this effect: "On Wednesday the eleventh day of this present month of March (1405) your rebels of the parts of Glamorgan, Morgannoc, Usk, Netherwent, and Overwent, were assembled to the number of eight thousand men, according to their own account; and they went on the said Wednesday in the morning, and burnt part of your town of Grosmont . . . and I immediately sent off my very dear cousin, the Lord Talbot, and the small body of my own household . . . who were but a very small force in all. . . . And there, by the aid of the Blessed

Trinity, your people gained the field and vanquished all the said rebels, and slew of them by fair account on the field on their return from the chase, some say eight hundred, and some say a thousand, being questioned on pain of death. Nevertheless, whether it were one or the other, on such an account I would not contend."

That was a sad day for poor Alice Scudamore, who lived hard by at Kentchurch Court beyond the river Monnow; for Alice Scudamore, or Skydmore, was the daughter of Owen Glyndwr, and the dead men whom Prince Henry left upon the field of Grosmont were Owen's followers. This defeat was Owen's first serious disaster, and was for him the beginning of the end. It is said that years later, after the end had come, he lived for a time with his daughter in the castellated tower that still stands below the hill of Grosmont; and, indeed, Kentchurch sometimes claims to be his burial-place. But the claims of Monnington, where another of his daughters lived, are generally thought to be more authentic.

By making a very short detour from the

direct road we may see the ruins of Skenfrith Castle on our way back to Monmouth. Even in the seventeenth century this castle was described as having been "decayed time out of the memory of man," and its remains are now naturally scanty and not especially picturesque. Far more interesting than the castle is the church, with its pretty timbered tower and fine sixteenth-century tombs. At the vicarage is carefully preserved the rarest treasure of this church: a cope that dates from the days before the Reformation.

On the other side of Monmouth, beyond the Wye, is the Forest of Dean, where one may drive for miles through country nearly as grand and quite as thickly wooded as the Black Forest. In most cases the trees are not nearly so fine as those of our own New Forest, for the greater part of this Forest of Dean was cut down to build our victorious fleets of the eighteenth century; but the width of view and the succession of tree-clad hills rising one beyond another, are compensations for the lack of magnificent individual trees. Of these, however,

there are a few, such as the Newland Oak and the High Beeches. But on the whole the beauty of Dean Forest lies in its distant views, its great expanses of foliage stretching away from one's feet to the blue horizon, as at the Speech House and above Parkend, and at many another place; though unfortunately many of these views are partly, if not entirely, spoilt by the black scars and smoking chimneys of the collieries. The Speech House is now a hotel, but it was originally built in Charles II.'s day as a kind of Court House in which to settle disputes connected with the Forest. St. Briavel's Castle, a few miles further south than this, and nearer the Wye, is a far older relic, for it is said that it once sheltered King John. Be that as it may, the little that is left of this castle is peculiarly attractive. To reach it, or the Speech House, or indeed to drive in the Forest of Dean at all, one must be prepared to encounter long hills with gradients in some places not less than 1 in 7, and roads that have suffered a good deal from the heavy traffic connected with the mines.

There is one expedition from Monmouth that we cannot possibly undertake in a car, yet should by no means omit. The famous Symond's Yat, with its perfect river scenery, cannot be approached by road, but it is easy to reach it by train, and very delightful to return to Monmouth by water, past the great limestone crags known as the Seven Sisters. At the hotel, where the train deposits one, the attraction is simply the view of the river and its wooded banks, but for the energetic this view may be much enlarged by half an hour's climb to the summit of the Yat itself, where those who enjoy scenery in proportion to the number of counties visible, may have the satisfaction of seeing seven. It was near Symond's Yat, at a defile significantly called The Slaughter to this day, that the Danes, under Eric of the Bloody Axe, were defeated by King Alfred's son Edward the Elder, named also the Unconquered, whom Matthew of Westminster declares to have been "even more glorious than his father for power and dignity."

The last fifteen miles of the Wye Valley,

from Monmouth to Chepstow, where the Wye falls into the estuary of the Severn, are probably as beautiful as any fifteen miles of English road. It is late in May or early in October that we should drive along this road to see it at its best, for the whole landscape is filled with trees. The quiet river, with the road close beside it, winds between two wooded heights from Redbrook to the Severn. A gentle rise takes us out of Redbrook, which has spoilt its beauty by manufacturing tin-plate; then we run down to Bigsweir Bridge, and cross it, with a lovely view downstream; pass Llandogo, where the Wye becomes tidal; pass Brockweir with its ferry; and driving through Tintern Parva come within sight of the unsurpassed beauty of Tintern Abbey.

Go to Tintern again and again, for it never palls. See it when the trees are first breaking into leaf, and all the leaves are of different colours; and see it again against the heavy foliage of the summer woods; and again when the hills behind it are red and gold in autumn. For the Cistercians, though they denied art, were

surely admirable artists; and being forbidden by their stern rule to adorn their churches with coloured glass or superfluous carving, they raised for themselves buildings of perfect form in the loveliest places in all England, where in spring and autumn the cold grey stone of their exquisite windows was the frame of fairer colours than were ever stained on glass.

It was of this abbey that the incomparable Gilpin wrote quite gravely: "A number of gable-ends hurt the eye with their regularity and disgust it by the vulgarity of their shape." A mallet, judiciously used, he suggested, might make improvements. Unfortunately time and long neglect have done only too much towards the ruin of Tintern, without any help from the judicious mallet of Gilpin. For many years the place was utterly uncared for; the stones were used by any one who wished to build a cottage, and an old beggar-woman made her dwelling in the library of the monks. This was long ago: every care is given to Tintern now. The floor of the nave is covered with well-kept turf, the fallen

TINTERN ABBEY.

CHEPSTOW CASTLE.

fragments of masonry are gathered together, the weak places of the building are strengthened wherever it is possible. But the alarming curves of the arches bear witness to past neglect, and the timid tourist is appalled by the ominous warning on the notice-board: "Persons who visit this Abbey do so at their own risk." This is discouraging.

From Tintern the road rises for about three miles towards the splendid scenery of the Wyndcliff. The river winds below, and beyond it among the trees a discerning eye may detect the straight ridge of Offa's Dyke. The view from the road as it passes beneath the famous cliff is wonderfully beautiful—a view of tortuous river and height beyond height of woodland, and gleaming in the distance the waters of the Severn estuary: and those who climb the Wyndcliff come down again well contented, having seen nine counties.

As we pass the little village at St. Arvan's the river is completely hidden by the walls and trees of Piercefield Park. A gentle descent of about two miles brings us to

the steep hill that winds downwards into Chepstow above the castle, passing under one of the old town-gates.

"The towne of Chepstow hath bene very strongly waulled," says Leland. "The waulles began at the ende of the great bridge over Wy, and so cam to the castel, the which yet standeth fayr and strong." To all appearances, as seen from the further side of Wye, it is strong still, and fair it certainly is, standing high upon the red cliffs that add so much to the beauty of this last bend of the river. It covers three acres of ground, but as it is built in a succession of courts, sloping upwards one above the other, the whole of its great length may be seen at once and the effect is very fine. This castle, since it was built by William FitzOsborne, Earl of Hereford, soon after the Conquest, has seen a good deal of life, and even more of death. Its second owner forfeited it, being of too independent a temperament to please the King. William, having safely imprisoned this rebellious Roger, sent him as an Easter gift his own royal robes—an attention that

was meant well, but was not very tactful. Earl Roger "forthwith caused a great fire to be made, and the mantle, the inner surcoat of silk, and the upper garment, lined with precious furs, to be suddenly burnt." This was his last act of rebellion. "By the brightness of God," exclaimed the flouted King, "he shall never come out of prison as long as I live!"

Later on the castle passed to the great house of Clare.

> "From Chepstow's towers, ere dawn of morn,
> Was heard afar the bugle-horn;
> And forth in banded pomp and pride
> Stout Clare and fiery Neville ride." *

The greatest of the Clares, Richard Strongbow, sometimes called the Conqueror of Ireland, was born at Chepstow; "a man tall in stature," we are told, "and of great generosity, and courteous manner. . . . In time of peace he was more disposed to be led by others than to command," but "the post he occupied in battle was a sure rallying-point for his troops."

* "The Norman Horse-shoe" (Sir Walter Scott.)

The castle passed from hand to hand through the stirring centuries that followed Strongbow's day. In the Civil War it had many adventures. It held for the King at first, was taken by the army of the Parliament, and was recaptured by a handful of Royalists under Sir Nicholas Kemys, by guile rather than by force. "On the whole," says Carlyle, "Cromwell will have to go. . . . Let him march swiftly!" He marched swiftly and took the town of Chepstow, but besieged the castle in vain. Carlyle tells the tale in few words: "Castle will not surrender,—he leaves Colonel Ewer to do the Castle; who, after four weeks, does it." It was not easily, however, that Colonel Ewer "did it." The garrison, reduced to nineteen, held out till they were starving, and even then determined, not on surrender, but on flight. Their boat lay ready beneath the walls, waiting for the darkness. But when night came no boat was there, for a soldier of the Parliament, a man of keen eyes, had detected both the boat and her object, and, with a knife between his teeth, had swum across the Wye and cut the rope that moored her

to the river-bank. The next day the nineteen Royalists surrendered. Thus Colonel Ewer "did the castle."

During the Commonwealth Jeremy Taylor, the author of "Holy Living and Holy Dying" —according to Coleridge the most eloquent of divines—was imprisoned in Chepstow Castle as a follower of Archbishop Laud: and here, too, when Cromwell's day was over, Sir Henry Marten, the regicide, suffered a mild form of imprisonment for twenty years. He was allowed not only to receive his friends but to visit them, and he was not deprived of the companionship of his wife. From what I read, however, I cannot assure myself that he appreciated the last of these privileges. He was buried in Chepstow Church, under an epitaph that he composed himself—a rhyming epitaph of a high moral tone. Yet neither poetry nor morality was Marten's strong point. At a later date a loyalist vicar removed from the chancel to the nave the bones of the man who had signed Charles I.'s death-warrant.

Chepstow Church once formed part of

a Benedictine Priory connected with the Norman Abbey of Cormeilles, and was originally the nave of a larger building. It dates from early in the twelfth century; and even if one has not time to enter the church it is well worth while to drive past the beautiful Early Norman entrance. There are some interesting tombs within, notably that of the second Earl of Worcester, who was present at the Field of the Cloth of Gold.

Two miles south of Chepstow is Mathern, where Tewdric of Glamorganshire, saint and king, was buried. He was killed in a battle fought at Tintern, and in the year 600 a chapel was built here as a shrine for him.

"Wye also," says Leland, "a very great and famose river, passeth through Ventland, and at S. Tereudake's Chapel entereth ynto Severn."

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